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MEMOIRS

OF

LORD BOLINGBROKE.

VOL. I.

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HENRY ST JOHN,

LORD VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

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MEMOIRS

OF

LORD BOLINGBROKE.

BY

GEORGE WINGROVE COOKE, ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

CONSIDERING the station which Bolingbroke occupies in our history, both as a statesman and a writer, it is surprising that no tolerable history of his life has yet appeared. The only connected accounts of him in the language are, the Memorials of his Life and Ministerial Conduct, published soon after his death, in the form of letters, and containing, as its title imports, little more than a history of his public conduct while secretary of state;—another, yet more meagre and less known, to be found only among the political pamphlets of the time, and consisting almost entirely of extracts from Boyer's Political State, and the Parliamentary History;—and a third, which, as it was written by Goldsmith, is more generally read. This last is, however, but a sketch. It was intended only for the edition of Bolingbroke's Works to which it was originally prefixed; and owes its popularity chiefly to its being reprinted among

the miscellaneous works of its author. The facts, and frequently even the language, are taken from the article 'St. John,' in the Biographia Britannica; of which, with some improvements in style, it appears to be little more than a transcript.

Even these accounts, slight and unsatisfactory as they are, abound in errors: there is scarcely a date relating to the private history of the subject of their memoir that is correctly given. There is, for instance, an error of no less than six years in the date of his birth; and Bolingbroke, who, as his contemporaries agree, entered very early into public life, is consequently described as passing his youth in idle debaucheries, and taking no part in public business until he reached the age of eight-and-twenty.

This neglect of a man whose powers were rated so highly by his contemporaries, is attributable to the unjust severity with which he was treated by the popular authors of the succeeding age, and the consequent disfavour with which his name has been heard by posterity. There is a fashion which rules even over fame; and the most illustrious characters are often unnaturally raised or depressed, according to its capricious influence. Bolingbroke is an in-

stance of this. In his lifetime he was celebrated as the first genius of his age: some are now ready to deny that he possessed any genius at all; and as the subjects of his writings are little adapted to the popular taste, men are rather inclined to join in the general condemnation than to examine its justice.

It is probably this circumstance which has induced posterity to visit so heavily upon the memory of Bolingbroke that infidelity which the fate of Raleigh, the history of Hume or Gibbon, and the poetry of Byron, have in other instances bribed them to pardon. The strength of prejudice existing against him has rendered Bolingbroke an ungrateful subject for biography. While the important and brilliant era in which he lived has been carefully illustrated, and while his contemporaries have found able and popular historians, his portrait has been sedulously erased from the picture in which it formed so prominent a figure; or if introduced, it has only been that the deep shadows in which it has been invested might form a happy contrast with the brilliancy of the hero for whom it was the grouper's design to bespeak our sympathy.

The appearance of a Life of Bolingbroke, therefore, requires no apology. The character of the man is sufficiently important to warrant the undertaking, and the insufficiency of all existing accounts is calculated to encourage it.

When I began to direct my miscellaneous reading towards this object, I was surprised to find the paucity of materials and the dearth of particular information which exist with regard to a man whom all contemporary writers agree in celebrating in such lofty phrases of general admiration. His enemies, who deny him every virtue and attribute to him almost every vice, describe a magnificent although a dark character. They dwell upon the charms of his powerful eloquence, while they insist that he prostituted it to unworthy objects;—they speak of the brilliancy of his conversation, and the finished elegance of his address, while they execrate him for the manner in which they declare these advantages were abused. Bolingbroke's superior talents were admired by both friends and enemies: beyond this admission we have little more from either than unbounded but general expressions of admiration and esteem, or loud but equally general accusations of public and

private turpitude. It is singular that no one of either party has preserved a specimen of his eloquence; and that, of the quick and glittering replies for which he was so famous, scarcely one has been handed down to us. His character as an eloquent public speaker and a brilliant conversationalist we must therefore be content to take from the unanimous consent of his contemporaries. As a writer he stands undisguised before us. This part of his character is open to every man's investigation: here he should be influenced neither by the censure of personal enemies, nor the praise of partial friends. We all have as ample opportunity of judging as they had, without the peculiar disadvantages which biassed their judgment.

The sources of information concerning the facts of his life and the vicissitudes of his career are multifarious, but rarely concurrent. Whether we take them from friend or foe,—and in his day there was no third class,—we must equally view them through the distorting medium of party prejudice.

The events which give a character to his public life are chiefly recorded by his political opponents; and when we recur to their pages after viewing him

as he appears in his familiar correspondence with Pope, Swift, Gay, Arbuthnot, and others of his intimate friends, we appear to breathe a different atmosphere—to see nothing but political dishonesty and guilty ambition suddenly take the place of unrestrained friendship and benevolent philosophy.* Even where his friends have described portions of his public conduct, the advantage is still in the hands of his opponents. Swift rarely pretends to any character higher than that of a party writer; but Coxe and Horace Walpole lay claim to the impartiality of historians. It is difficult, however, to discover that the historians are more scrupulous than the partisan, in blackening the characters of those whose politics they dislike.

To Archdeacon Coxe, nevertheless, much praise must be accorded: if he has been partial, he has laid before his readers the authorities upon which he formed his judgment. The raw materials of his Life of Walpole, published in the two quarto volumes annexed to it, are a most valuable addition to our stores of history,—an addition which we owe entirely

* I am speaking of Bolingbroke's *practical*, not his *speculative* philosophy.

to his industry and influence. From this source I have drawn largely, as every one must who writes upon that period of our history; and I take this opportunity of acknowledging my obligation.

The benefit which Mr. Coxe has conferred upon history is not limited to the immediate produce of his labours; his example has stimulated others to similar undertakings. The publication of family papers has since become general, and the periods to which they relate proportionably better known. Of these, the Letters of Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, and his Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George the Second, both edited by the late Lord Dover, are particularly valuable. Our literature is considerably indebted to the noble editor for the ability and candour with which he has performed his task.

I may mention also the selections from the Marchmont Papers, recently published. These contain many letters from Bolingbroke during his residence in France; and the frequent recurrence of his name in the Diary of Hugh Earl of Marchmont, furnishes strong evidence of the deference which was paid to his authority after he had ceased to take any

ostensible part in political affairs. The editor of these papers has been somewhat severe upon the memory of Bolingbroke, and seems to consider that an apology is necessary for the publication of any letters from so dangerous a person. They are, however, by far the most valuable, as well as the most beautiful, in his collection. Those parts of them which relate to politics breathe a lofty patriotism; and we never find the sentiments of the deist intruded among the expressions of private friendship.

The quantity of history relating to the reigns which the long life of Bolingbroke included is immense. The histories, memoirs, letters, pamphlets, together with the fleeting publications of the day, form a mass amid which the impartial investigator of truth may easily become bewildered. To set out with a predilection in favour of one of the great parties, and to judge of the acts of individuals by a reference to that predilection, as it is the most common, is certainly the most easy method to pursue in writing upon this period.

I have, however, ventured to depart from a course I find so generally followed. While I unreservedly

adopt those grand constitutional doctrines which are generally called Whig principles, I have not hesitated to award censure because the individuals whose conduct deserved it were ranked as the adherents of a party whose general tenets I revere.

My task has not, however, carried me far into the stream of general history. It was the misfortune of Bolingbroke that his day of power immediately preceded that age of general information which he was so instrumental in ushering in, but the benefits of which he was not permitted to partake. Those regular periodical publications which soon after began to give full accounts of the parliamentary debates, were during his administration unknown. It is only since their establishment that the eloquence of our statesmen has been transmitted to posterity. The biographer of a minister whose parliamentary career closed before that time has little temptation to dwell upon what is but a dull and unvaried series of motions and divisions, known only as they are recorded in the Journals of the Houses, or in the scarcely more explanatory pages of the Parliamentary History.

The history of England during the life of Boling-

broke has been fully and ably detailed by the biographer of his contemporary Walpole. My course has therefore been to adhere closely to the subject of my work, and to recur to public history no farther than was necessary to preserve the continuity of the narrative. The notices of public events which do not bear immediate relation to the fortunes of Bolingbroke are therefore concise, and always made with this view.

For the account of that part of the Viscount's life which was passed in France, I have had frequent recourse to the literature of that nation. The "Essai Historique sur Bolingbroke" of General Grimoard, and the "Œuvres Philosophes de St. Lambert," have afforded me much assistance, and enabled me to rectify many errors; but the dates of these authors are frequently erroneous, and have never been adopted but where their probability has appeared from other sources.

The proper use of these heterogeneous materials is a work of much difficulty. While reading so much violent and undeserved abuse, the mind is naturally prone to take the side of the weaker party, and the

biographer is in danger of degenerating into an apologist.

Against such an undue bias I have been fortified by two powerful sentiments. I have regarded his political life with the prepossessions of a Whig;* and I have opposed to his sceptical philosophy the conviction of a Christian.

In examining his works upon this latter point, I would not, however, be supposed to have undertaken their refutation:—this has already been done by far abler pens. My province has only been to give an account of them sufficient to enable the reader to form a judgment of what his opinions upon this subject were, and of the degree of ability with which he has supported them. An elaborate exposition of his fallacies would require far more theological learning than I can boast, and far more space than I was at liberty to devote.

* In avowing a preference for the tenets of the Whigs, I intend to express only an anxious affection for the principles of our free constitution, and a desire to see those principles in every instance soberly and steadily carried out into practice.—The Whigs have at least been consistent in their professions.

The work which is now offered to the public has long been the companion of my hours of leisure from severer studies. What was commenced as an amusement was prosecuted with diligence; the hope that it might be found worthy to occupy an evidently vacant place in our literature urged its completion. I have attempted to portray Bolingbroke, not as he appeared either to his admirers or his enemies, but as he was: whether I have succeeded will soon be adjudged.

Inner Temple Lane,
February 16th, 1835.

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INDIVIDUALS rendered illustrious by their genius or their fortunes are objects of a curiosity as rational as it is universal. With them we seek a closer intimacy than we can acquire from the page of general history; which, in tracing the progress of events, presents the actors to our view only as they influence the subject of the narrative. There, we behold the master-spirits of the age in tableau; we feel desirous of viewing them individually, of beholding the secret causes of success and disaster, and of tracing those lighter shades of character which are necessary to the perfection of the por-

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trait. It is the province of Biography to gratify this desire: it brings under our minute inspection characters which we had before seen but distantly and transiently; that, while our admiration is excited by their genius or their virtue, our emulation may be encouraged by finding they were not free from the failings of humanity. Thus, where we exhibit excellences, we must not conceal defects; where we celebrate virtues, we must also expose and condemn vices. Biography holds a balance of merit or demerit, which History cannot pause to determine. She falsifies the experience of mankind when she descends to the language of unmixed panegyric; she degrades herself when partiality for her subject induces her to become the apologist for vice.

Posterity is as much instructed by the errors as by the successes of those who have gone before, and does not refuse to be interested in the career of an individual because with much that is excellent he mingled much that is evil. Such was Bolingbroke; a man whose memory has been visited with unjust severity from the most opposite quarters. Those who would applaud the statesman, dare not raise their voice in defence of the sceptic; while others, who approve his speculative tenets, almost universally condemn his political principles.

Both parties have therefore indulged in immoderate censure when the character of Bolingbroke was

to be delineated: his opinions, which, if sincere, as we have every reason to believe they were, were the one great defect of a brilliant mind, have been magnified into crimes, and held to taint every sentiment, however honourable, and to vitiate every action, however noble. Be it our endeavour to denude his character of this veil of prejudice, to exhibit him as he was: while we expose his deformities, let us also point out and admire his excellences.

As the acquisition of distinctions is more honourable than their enjoyment, it might be thought that original genius would seldom seek to adorn itself with inherited honours. But the pride of ancestry is universal. If it be a weakness, it is one which none commonly despise but those who have little temptation to indulge it. The lineage of Bolingbroke was worthy of his genius and his fortunes. Among the noble families of England, that of St. John is conspicuous for its antiquity, its dignity, and its possessions. We find William de St. John holding an honourable post in the army of the Conqueror; and he appears to have rendered that monarch important assistance in the battle of Hastings. This chief received large rewards for his services, and was the founder of the family in England.

William de St. John left two sons, who, by their noble alliances, increased the influence and possessions of the family. Bolingbroke was descended

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from John, the younger of these sons, through a female descendant named Mabel. This lady married Adam de Port, a descendant of the Barons of Basing in Hampshire; a title which his ancestors had enjoyed long anterior to the Conquest. The heir of Adam de Port assumed, upon the death of his father, his maternal name of St. John, which was retained by his issue. Thus, although Bolingbroke derived his family name from one of the Norman chiefs who upheld the standard of the Conqueror, his paternal descent was from the ancient nobility of the Saxons.

Nor did this house owe all its importance to its antiquity and wealth. In each succeeding age, it produced men conspicuous in the field, the cabinet, and the senate. Their talents and services did not pass unrewarded; the lordships of Bletshoe, Tregone, and Grandison had arisen and expired in his family before Bolingbroke threw over it a lustre which no titles could alone bestow. As their numbers increased, their unity became less perfect; and during the civil wars we find them supporting different parties. While Sir John St. John, the representative of one branch, sided with the royalists and lost three of his sons in the service of his king; Oliver, sprung from another branch, shone as one of the master-spirits and guiding stars of the republicans. These divisions of the family, dissimilar as were their politics, were united by the marriage of the grandparents of Bolingbroke; so that the Chief Justice of

Cromwell was his great-grandfather on the maternal side—a circumstance of which his political opponents did not fail to remind him.

The issue of this marriage was Henry St. John, who inherited a baronetcy, but for whom the talents of his son afterwards obtained much higher honours. He married the daughter of the Earl of Warwick, by whom he had an only son, who was born on the 1st October, 1678,* at the family seat at Battersea.

This son was Henry St. John, the future Viscount Bolingbroke, whose birth and fortune were therefore sufficient to qualify him to contest the highest honours of the state. Henry experienced but little parental care: the tastes of Sir Henry never prompted him to direct the education of his son. During his infancy and childhood, he was intrusted to the care of his grandmother, who inherited the puritanical prepossessions of her father. This old lady was a rigid presbyterian, and seems to have imbibed a large portion of the fanaticism which then distinguished that sect. Her religious guide was Daniel Burgess, a puritan preacher celebrated rather for the quaintness of his conceits than the soundness of his understanding.

We have a specimen of this man's style of preaching in an anecdote which occurs in the life of Dr.

* This date is fixed by a letter from him, preserved among the Egremont Papers. It is dated New-year's Day 1738. "Nine months hence," he says, "I shall be threescore." This date agrees also with Swift's statement.

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Yalden. The doctor was arrested upon suspicion of being concerned in the affair which was at the time called Bishop Atterbury's plot. His papers were seized and strictly examined; but the only circumstance which could countenance the suspicion that was entertained of him was a mysterious memorandum found in an old pocket-book. It consisted of these two cabalistic words, "Thorough-paced doctrine." This memorandum the examiners could not understand, and they therefore, of course, concluded that it was pregnant with treason. Dr. Yalden's explanation removed the difficulty. It was an old memorandum, he said, which he had made in the reign of Queen Anne. He was then at the University, and during one of the vacations he paid a visit to the metropolis. While there, he had been induced by curiosity to hear the famous Daniel Burgess, and a passage in his sermon had occasioned the suspected entry. The preacher had been inveighing against pernicious doctrines, and, after enumerating many kinds, continued: "But, above all other pernicious doctrines, beware, my beloved, of the thorough-paced doctrine; that doctrine, I mean, which, coming in at one ear, paces straight through the head and out at the other ear."

To this person's care was young St. John consigned, in order that he might acquire the rudiments of learning and the principles of the presbyterians. No choice could have been less adapted to the temper and abilities of the youthful pupil: his quick sensibi-

lity was disgusted, and his eager curiosity was checked, by never-ending theological disquisitions; and his ready perception of the ridiculous quickly found exercise in deriding the eccentricities of his tutor. Perhaps to this disgust for the sombre system of the puritans, which was so injudiciously excited and so early engraven upon his mind, we may ascribe much of the error of his after life. Burgess appears to have been a mere fanatic. His pupil's reading was almost confined to a ponderous folio, containing the sermons of Dr. Manton. Dr. Manton was a rector of St. Paul's Covent Garden, who had been expelled from his living for non-conformity, and who had then employed his leisure in writing one hundred and nineteen sermons upon the 119th Psalm. This drowsy mass formed St. John's daily task-book; and it can scarcely be wondered at, that, sickened by the gloomy superstition by which he was surrounded, he should, with the hasty temper of youth, imbibe a prejudice against all religion, from the injudicious manner in which it was forced upon him.

The vision of Dr. Manton's folio seems often to have haunted him after its substantial persecutions had ceased. In one of his letters to Pope,* he takes an opportunity of ridiculing the puritanical parson Dr. Manton, whom, when a boy, he was sometimes condemned to read; and a similar remark occurs in another part of his writings. The whole of his conduct shows that the severity of his early educa-

* Pope's Letters, Warton's edition of his Works, vol. ix.

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tion produced impressions the very opposite to those which his instructor contemplated.

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These unpalatable occupations were not, however, of any long continuance. Henry soon grew out of the jurisdiction of his grandmother; and with her authority terminated that of her confessor. He was now sent to Eton; and perhaps the dulness of Burgess gave him a keener relish for those studies in which he immediately engaged. Of his career at Eton we know nothing, except that he was there at the same time with Robert Walpole. It is said that the contests which afterwards took place between these two great men upon so conspicuous a theatre, and with such important consequences, were rendered bitter and personal by the mutual dislike which had its commencement even thus early.* St. John doubtless acquired, at Eton, at least the rudiments of sound learning; probably the foundation was now laid of the superstructure which his after life was consumed in completing.

How long he remained at Eton, is not known. He was removed thence to Christ Church, Oxford, where his great natural advantages had more facilities for development. His wit and genius soon distinguished him among his companions, and he already assumed a superiority which he was des-

* Horace Walpole's Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George II. When this author says that Bolingbroke and his father were rivals at school, he must have meant at Eton. Bolingbroke never was at any other school: Walpole was two years older than Bolingbroke.

tined always to maintain. His extraordinary talents forced themselves into general notice; and his tutors confessed that in him they had no common pupil. His original and unquiet curiosity startled and perplexed them, and his prodigious strength of memory and quick apprehension excited their astonishment. His dashing and brilliant style of conversation was the admiration of his friends, and his social disposition rendered their affection equal to their admiration.

But St. John seemed little assiduous to discover or improve his great talents. Nature appeared to have been scarcely more prodigal in bestowing, than he was industrious in abusing them. A career of wild dissipation left him little leisure for the pursuit of knowledge. Even thus early he professed a profound contempt for mere book-learning, and he would jestingly shield himself from the reproaches of his tutors under the tenacity of his memory. He was afraid, he declared, to read many books, lest he should fill his head with what did not deserve a place there; and, when it was once in, he found it impossible to get it out again.

It is probable that St. John fell in with a common affectation, in pretending an idleness he did not practise. Great as his excesses were, there is reason to believe that his reading, though varied and desultory, was nevertheless continued with considerable assiduity. Amid all his pleasures, his studies were never entirely intermitted; and during his

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residence at the University, he contrived to cultivate the classics, and to acquire an extensive acquaintance with the literature of his own country. The dissipation of St. John was not that unbroken round of systematic debauchery, which destroys the character of the man, and leaves only that of the debauchee: amid all his riot, there occurred lucid intervals in which he rallied his scattered thoughts and exerted his nobler faculties. Many years afterwards, he declared that the love of study and desire of knowledge were what he felt all his life; and though his genius, unlike the demon of Socrates, whispered so softly, that very often he heard him not in the hurry of those passions with which he was transported, yet some calmer hours there were, and in them he hearkened to him.*

But, soft as were the whisperings of his genius during his residence at Oxford, and rare and fitful as were his intervals of steady application, his reputation rapidly increased. Accurate critical knowledge he never attained, or desired; but his desultory reading, tenacious memory, and strong reasoning powers, rendered him an antagonist to be dreaded even by those who had laboured most diligently at the studies he had neglected. His learning was crude and undigested, but the mass was great; and as he always possessed the showy art of displaying every qualification in the most advantageous view, his companions considered him as resembling Crich-

* Essay on the True Use of Retirement and Study.

ton as closely in his acquirements, as he certainly did in his dissipation. When he left them, they looked after him with anxious expectations as he immerged into the world: none doubted that he was destined to perform a distinguished part in the great drama of his age.

But St. John was not yet satiated with riot. His father had intended that, upon leaving the University, he should immediately apply himself to public business: passion was however yet too strong for reason; and Sir Henry could not severely reprove irregularities in which he had himself indulged.* Henceforward he was unchecked in his career of pleasure, and he ran it recklessly. Formed to excel in whatever he might undertake, he soon became as notorious for his excesses, as he was afterwards eminent for his genius and learning. By those who could yet remember the court of Charles the Second, he was compared to Rochester; and he was then proud of the comparison. He left nothing unaccomplished that could increase the similitude; he conducted his drunken revels with the most unblushing publicity, and his mistress, Miss Gumley, was the most beautiful courtesan of her day: but

* We learn from Bishop Barlow, that Bolingbroke's father was tried and convicted of the murder of Sir William Estcourt. Of the extenuating circumstances, if there were any, which procured a remission of the sentence, we are ignorant: but the bishop, in arguing the legality of the pardon, has preserved the memory of the crime. — *Bishop Barlow's Cases of Conscience*, Preface.

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St. John was rather captivated by her celebrity than won by her beauty; his attentions were not very assiduous, nor was his constancy very remarkable. The town was rife with accounts of his wild exploits; and they were censured with a smile, while the rake was courted and caressed. Some of his drunken extravagances are highly descriptive of the state of society at the period, and, disgraceful as they are to the actor, reflect equal discredit upon the public taste which could tolerate, and even applaud them.

But even now, when he was abusing to the utmost the liberty he had just obtained by his emancipation from university discipline, his more sober friends could discern in him the seeds of better things. Amid all his riot, he discovered an acute taste for higher pleasures. He eagerly cultivated the friendship of the men of genius and learning who then flourished; and they were flattered by the homage of so promising a disciple. It must be ever mentioned to his honour, that he cheered the declining age of poor Dryden, who now, stripped of his pension and struggling with poverty, had become the slave of the booksellers. Bolingbroke long afterwards related an instance which he had witnessed of the dependence of the poet. On one occasion, when he was sitting with him, a person was heard below. "This," said Dryden, "is Tonson; you will take care not to depart before he goes away: for I have not completed the sheet which I promised

him; and if you leave me unprotected, I must suffer all the rudeness to which his resentment can prompt his tongue."*

His friendship for Dryden produced the first literary attempt that St. John made in public. In 1697, the poet published his translation of Virgil; and a copy of eulogistic verses from the pen of St. John was prefixed to the first edition. This attempt rather attests his admiration of the genius of his friend, than any strong poetical talent in himself. His verses betray much labour and little taste, and their harshness and incorrectness prove that, if he had studied the works of the veteran he so much admired, he sought in vain to imitate the harmony by which he was so distinguished.

This copy of verses was, however, thought worthy of being pirated; but perhaps rather for their author's name, than from any intrinsic merit they possessed. In the year 1714, the Chevalier de St. Hyacinthe, better known as the Chevalier de Thémiseul, published in Holland a French work, called "*Le Chef-d'œuvre d'un Inconnu, avec des remarques.*" The poem is a whimsical old ballad, which the chevalier criticises with some humour and more pedantry. It was the custom of the time to prefix a sort of polyglot encomium to a new work, and the chevalier was not a man to neglect such a fashion. Greek, Latin, Dutch, and French odes he had in numbers; but an English one was wanting, and St. John's praises of

* Lives of the Poets.

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Dryden were purloined without scruple. It was slightly altered for the occasion; but the alterations were infinitely worse than the original. In the first edition, the author disguised his fraud by printing the verses in Greek characters: in the second, he grew bolder; they were inserted in the common character, and signed "Henricus de Bolingbroke, Annæ a secretis."

Thémiseul's egotism betrays his robbery. When he tells us, in the preface of his work, that he is in his forty-seventh year and in excellent health, he forgets that he had already made Bolingbroke address him as

"Young, spite of age; in spite of weakness, strong;"

a description which applies aptly enough to the bodily infirmity and mental vigour of the poet, but with little justice to the sturdy chevalier.

In 1700, St. John published "Almahide, an ode," which found the fate it merited. It is a lifeless production, of which the only poetical idea is avowedly borrowed.*

There are two other poetical trifles, written by St. John about the period of which we are now speaking. The first is a copy of verses to one of his mistresses—apparently a lady who little valued such proofs of admiration; the other, a prologue to

* It is singular that this ode is only preserved in a rare and long-forgotten book, called "Whartoniana." If St. John had an enemy more bitter than Stanhope and Walpole, it was the Earl of Wharton.

the Earl of Orrery's tragedy of Altemira. These are the most favourable specimens we have of St. John's muse; but, although superior to the two efforts we before noticed, they contain nothing to support a claim on the part of their author to the honours of poesy.

These performances point out his pursuits, and are illustrative of his character. In theory, they exhibit him as the philosophical defender of good taste and morality; and we know him to have been, at this time in practice, a reckless rake and an undisguised libertine.*

St. John, however, soon discovered that poetry was not the department of literature in which he was destined to succeed. Living as he always did in an atmosphere of poetry, and enjoying the intimacy of the most celebrated poets of our language, he could not indeed always avoid the infection. He never, however, had the temerity to submit any of these amusements to the public. They were sometimes communicated to his two intimate friends; but they were too sincerely his friends to flatter him that he was a poet. Swift liberally abused them, and Pope never mentioned them at all. The author approved their judgment, and properly applied to himself the lines of Horace:—

———Mediocribus esse poetis
Non homines, non dii, non concessere columnæ.

* Johnson once rebuked such a theoretical moralist by saying, "Sir, your mind is all virtue, your body all vice."

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The only poetical production of his extant, besides those we have already enumerated, is a paraphrase upon some lines of Horace, which he enclosed to Swift, telling him he had written them in a post-chaise.*

These scraps of poetry are little valuable in themselves, and contribute nothing to the reputation of their author; but they become objects of curiosity as his productions, and, since most of them are scattered about in old editions and scarce works, we have added them in the Appendix.†

St. John's extravagances were as injurious to his father's purse as to his own reputation. If he could not wean him from his follies, he at least resolved to remove them from his own immediate notice. Henry was therefore sent to travel; and he probably passed about two years upon the Continent. Of his adventures while absent from England, no record remains: we only know that he was at Milan, and that he there obtained the acquaintance of the Baron de Seckingen, to whom he writes in the year 1711, assuring him that he had never forgotten their old friendship since its commencement at Milan, nor the happy days they had there passed together.‡

During his travels, he acquired a perfect knowledge of the French language; an advantage which to him was of signal service in his political career.

It is difficult to assign the exact period of this

* Swift's Letters. † Appendix, No. 1.

‡ Lettres de Bolingbroke, vol. i. p. 57.

residence abroad. That he was in England in 1697, is established by the date of Dryden's Virgil: and as his next production was Almahide, his absence was probably during the years 1698 and 9. These were the two years immediately preceding his entering upon public life.

St. John was now twenty-one years old. Hitherto his life presents only a course of riotous dissipation, interspersed with a few brighter spots on which the eye may rest with pleasure. Had the talents which were then apparent only in their abuse never been reclaimed to nobler objects, his character would have deserved and found but oblivion or contempt. The possession of great abilities must rather increase than lessen our scorn of the possessor, if, when capable of deeds worthy of the memory and applause of posterity, he seems anxious only to acquire a momentary and disgraceful notoriety.

But we have seen, that amid all the intemperance of his youth, the spirit of St. John looked forward to the time when such pursuits should be abandoned for objects of more honourable ambition; and he took every opportunity which his wayward humours would allow him to prepare himself for such a career. He seems to have been conscious that these excesses were but the first turbid bubbling of that fountain, which, when its impurities had been thus purged, was to gush forth in continued brightness.

The earliest evidence of disgust for the pleasures he had hitherto pursued with such avidity, was an

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inclination towards marriage; and his friends were not long in procuring him a connexion suited to his rank. This was the daughter and co-heiress of Sir Henry Winchescomb, the descendant of a man well known in the reign of Henry the Eighth by the familiar title of Jack of Newbury—a fine specimen of the wealth and liberality of the English merchant even in those early days. Jack of Newbury was a clothier; but instances of his munificence are recorded which would not have disgraced the most successful of the courtiers who followed Henry for their jackal share of the plunder of the monasteries. At one time he entertained the king and the whole of his retinue with a magnificence which Wolsey himself could not have excelled; and at another, when the Scots were to be driven within their border, he led to his sovereign's assistance a hundred men, paid and equipped at his own expense, who shared the danger and the glory of Flodden Field. Such examples among the tradesmen of England go far to disprove that insignificance which Hume has so pertinaciously attributed to the commons of this reign.

1700.

The union of St. John with this lady took place in 1700. It was a mere marriage of convenience. There was probably but little affection on either side: St. John never professed any. By the marriage-settlement he however obtained a large accession of property, which, as his father lived to enjoy the family estates to a very old age, was no small advantage to

him. The Winchescomb estates were scattered over the counties of Wiltshire, Surrey, and Middlesex; and St. John's rent-roll was by no means inconsiderable. He was now established in life, and his friends indulged the hope of a complete reformation. But it was a much easier task to adjust the interests of the two families, than to assimilate the dispositions of the immediate parties. St. John was imperious and inconstant; the lady was obstinate and jealous. It was not easy to reduce his wild disposition to the tameness of domestic life. Could she have preserved her temper, she might perhaps have won him from irregularities which habit had rendered inveterate; the object was at least worthy of the attempt: but the recurrence of her reproaches quickly destroyed what little hold she had upon his affections. He complained that her temper was insufferable, and she that his infidelities were shameless and intolerable: they soon formally separated.

Marriage was only resolved on by St. John as a prelude to engaging in political pursuits; a line of life to which his peculiar advantages directed his attention, and whose splendid rewards attracted his ambition. The extended connexions of his family would have been sufficient to inspire men of far less natural ability than he possessed, with the idea of pushing their fortunes in a career of public life. Nor was he without experienced political guides to direct his early footsteps. His grandfather, Sir Walter St. John, who had long represented the county of Wilts in

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parliament, was still alive. His father, too, was well skilled in the bearings of parties: he also had represented Wiltshire, and had sat several times for Wootton Bassett; a borough in which the family interest of the St. Johns was predominant.

Sir Henry, however, now resigned a pursuit in which he had never met with much success, and his son succeeded him in the borough. He was returned as one of its representatives to the parliament which met in February of this year, and he took his seat in the English senate with advantages inferior to those of no member who sat there. His family interest was powerful; but the real and irresistible resources of St. John were seated in himself. It was not long before these were developed. The sparkling vivacity and easy gaiety which his familiar conversations had discovered, were accompanied with other qualities with which they are not commonly allied. Every effort of St. John bore that pregnancy of wit which constitutes genius: it animated his conversation, it glittered in his speech, it flashed in his reply. It is said that, in the delivery of his speeches, there were occasional pauses of reflection; but when he had recovered and arranged his ideas, as he clothed them in words, his language flowed on without either hurry or hesitation in a copious stream of eloquence which equally delighted the ear and convinced the judgment. In all the arts of oratory he seemed to have been endued with a natural proficiency; and even the tactics of debate were not in him the ac-

quirements of experience. Where the weakness of a cause was to be disguised, or the attention of the audience withdrawn from its examination, the wit of the orator shot like a star-shoot athwart the debate; but when the arguments of an adversary were to be sifted and his fallacies exposed, he discovered a wonderful power of analyzing his subject at a single glance, and of almost instinctively discovering its capabilities of attack and defence. He united in his reply a subtlety of reasoning, a profundity of thinking, and a solidity of judgment, which fixed attention and commanded admiration.

Such talents could not be long without their influence in an English house of commons; it remained only to be seen into which scale that influence would be thrown. His father and grandfather had sided with the Whigs, and their example and inclination were expected to influence his choice. That party was now in power, and from them he might expect immediate advancement; they were yet popular with the country, and strong in their majorities, so that their supremacy appeared well established. But St. John was far too ambitious to enter into the service of an established party, to bow himself to its leaders, and to rise by slow gradations from the lowest steps of office. His original genius prompted him to choose an eccentric course, and the juncture was highly favourable to his design.

Robert Harley was now secretly laying the foundations of the power which he afterwards en-

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joyed: having already adopted that undecided policy which he never renounced, he at first pursued it with success, and was courted by both parties, while he was the servant of neither. St. John thought he recognised in him a kindred spirit, and resolved to seek his friendship and share his fortunes. Harley met his overtures with cordiality, and in a short time they were inseparable.

The struggle for ascendency which afterwards divided Harley and St. John, and the virulent hatred with which they ever after regarded each other, have induced the belief that the friendship of these two great men was never sincere; that St. John attached himself to Harley, only that he might share his rising fortunes; and that the latter encouraged his advances, only that he might strengthen the party by which he intended to reach the summit of power. These views doubtless had their weight in forming and cementing the union of the two aspirants after distinction; but there is no reason to suppose that these were their only motives. The experience and cunning of Harley might perhaps have led him to simulate what he did not feel; but St. John had not yet learned to dissemble, and he at least doubtless entertained the sentiments he professed. We may find a bond of sympathy in their private tastes as well as their political interests. Harley was not indeed in the habit of indulging to excess in either of the pleasures which were so seductive to St. John; yet he could appreciate his talent and enjoy his con-

versation. The love of literature had revived with tenfold force in St. John's breast; it was now aided by ambition. The undisputed master of fashionable follies had another object; and the desire of excelling in the senate taught him to labour in the study. That these pursuits were in accordance with the taste of Harley, can receive no higher testimony than the history of his country's literature affords. The collection of MSS. which bears his name, and which forms the most invaluable treasure that our national library can boast, attests at once his taste, his zeal, and his liberality.

But, whatever may have been the secret motives of the two allies, it is certain that their union was strictly preserved, and that their political conduct was in accordance with their private intimacy. That St. John ever relied upon Harley as a patron, his character forbids us to believe; but the latter's greater experience and established reputation would, of course, give him more powerful influence in the party to which St. John attached himself, and lent some colour, but little justice, to the accusation of ingratitude with which he was afterwards assailed. He, indeed, received his first official appointment from the hand of Harley; but Harley offered it as a friend and ally, not as a patron; and he was well requited by the conduct of the coadjutor he thus secured.

CHAPTER II.

Political State of England in the Year 1700.

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THE history of a statesman is identified with the political events of his age. It will be necessary, therefore, in order that we may understand the motives of the actions we are about to relate, that we take a summary view of the foreign relations and internal state of this country at the time St. John first obtained a voice in its councils.

England was now slowly recovering from the shock which had shaken James the Second from his throne. His mad attack upon their laws and religion had united against him the most hostile factions; and reduced into one opposing mass principles the most jarring and elements the most discordant. Their zeal was as great as their only bond of union—necessity—was urgent; and the imbecile tyrant fled at the first echo of their voice.

But no sooner was the immediate danger past, than the heterogeneous mass resumed its more ordinary divisions; party prejudices regained their former authority, and the Tories were abashed at the

victory they themselves had helped to secure. They saw their tenets of divine right and non-resistance—the very watch-words and war-cries of their party, which had obtained for them the confidence and support of successive monarchs—suddenly and for ever swept away. They saw, also, that they had been practically conforming to principles which in theory they had uniformly opposed. At a period when the voice of faction had been hushed in dread of the approaching tempest, they had beheld their rules of government contemned and abandoned, and those of their rivals acknowledged and adhered to: and when they now reflected upon what had passed, they trembled for their political existence as a party.

Their first endeavour, therefore, was to retain the integrity of the succession; and the clumsy expedient of a regent with kingly power was invented to save their consistency without compromising their safety. The leaders of the Whigs, however, were more decided in their views, since their principles were more adapted to meet the exigency. They argued, that the right of resistance which enabled them to suspend the exercise of a sovereign's functions would equally extend to his deposition. They therefore boldly asserted the great principle of an original contract between king and people; they declared allegiance and protection to be reciprocal ties depending upon each other; and, to confirm and protect these principles of government, they seated William the Third upon the throne.

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Since this was a measure effected in spite of the determined opposition of the Tories, they could not expect to enjoy any great share of power or favour under the new sovereign; nor is it surprising that they should favour the return of a dynasty from whom they might expect honours and power. The most violent of their party refused the oath of allegiance to the new king, and, distinguished by the title of non-jurors, openly declared for a restoration of James. When the battle of the Boyne had extinguished all reasonable hopes of success by arms, and the canonized exile had retired to cultivate in his seclusion a reputation for sanctity which his early habits must have sadly impaired, those who looked for him as the renovator of their ruined fortunes secretly intrigued for what they dared not openly attempt.

The Tories, therefore, were generally considered as favourable to the return of the old king; the Whigs, as resolute in their purpose of maintaining the monarch of their choice. Jealousy of prerogative was, however, still a principle by no means abjured; and William, watched by the Whigs and plotted against by the Tories, was glad to abandon all high pretensions at home, in return for being allowed to make himself respected abroad. The nation readily joined in his views, provoked a struggle with a powerful rival, and triumphed. But success procured for England mere empty honour; the solid advantages were monopolized by her allies.

The treaty of Ryswick, which concluded this war, was sufficiently favourable to them and humiliating to France; but, upon the part of England, it stipulated only the recognition of William. It stripped the French king of almost all his conquests, and appears to have been concluded by him only with the view of clearing the board for a more important game.

1697.

Louis the Fourteenth was, at this time, at once the most powerful, the most able, and the most ambitious monarch in Europe. If by the treaty of Ryswick he restored nearly all the conquests he had made during the war, he still no less effectually accomplished his immediate purpose. Alone and unsupported, he had broken in pieces the powerful confederacy of Augsburg; and when England, Holland, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and Savoy were banded against a single power, it was no small triumph to Louis to withdraw his kingdom uncrippled from such a contest.

This confederacy, and the struggle by which it was dissolved, had neither moderated his ambition, nor induced him to lay aside his plans of ulterior aggrandizement. And now a splendid prize seemed to demand the exertion of all his energies.

Charles the Second of Spain, who had been the victim of incessant invasions, and at whose expense much of Louis's military glory had been acquired, was now in a declining state. Although he had not yet reached his fortieth year, his constitution, originally

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feeble, was worn by the reverses with which he had been harassed, and it was evident that the throne of Spain would soon be vacant. Charles had no issue by either of his queens; but he had the power of nominating his successor, and three powerful competitors were eagerly soliciting his choice. Louis, the Emperor Leopold, and the Elector of Bavaria, were the contending candidates. Each asserted an hereditary right; although, in tracing that right, the parties broke through oaths and compacts with a facility which history shows to be well justified by custom, when kings are the competitors and a kingdom the prize. The right of the Bourbons, otherwise unimpeachable, had been formally and distinctly renounced upon the very occasion which gave it birth. Leopold, to establish a plausible title, was compelled to assert the indefeasible right of male heirs, and to ascend to Maximilian, the father of both branches of the house of Austria; while the Elector of Bavaria's claims rested upon a will of Philip the Fourth in favour of his mother, the Infanta Margaret.

It was not difficult to foresee that, of these competitors, the imbecile and declining king would award the prize to him whom he most dreaded. It was apparent to Europe that Louis had retired from the late contest only that he might concentrate his power for one great and decisive blow. Spain once indivisibly united with France, the dreams of universal power which had dazzled his youth would no longer

be the vain chimera of an ambitious mind; and experience had rather taught him policy to pursue his object, than moderation to abandon it.

Ere the contingency should occur, England resolved to interfere; but since she and her allies were unwilling to commence a war in which success could not assure them security, recourse was had to negotiation, and a treaty was signed by England, Holland, and France.

1698. In this treaty it was stipulated that, at the death of Charles the Second without issue, his dominions should be divided among the competitors for his crown; and a formal division of the Spanish monarchy and its dependencies was marked out. Spain and her American colonies were assigned to the Elector of Bavaria; the dukedom of Milan to the Emperor; the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, the ports on the Tuscan shore, and the marquisate of Final, with all the Spanish territory beyond the Pyrenees, were allotted to France.

But, weak as Charles was, an insult so heartless and so galling as the division of his kingdom while he yet reigned stung him to resentment. He immediately executed a will in favour of the elector; and England and Holland rejoiced at the success of their scheme. But the path of an ambitious spirit is not to be crossed with impunity; and the sudden death of the electoral prince, which happened soon after, was attributed to the opposition he was likely to afford to the designs of Louis.

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This event rendered a new treaty necessary; and during the negotiations France manœuvred so skilfully to obtain the confidence of Charles, and the emperor so imprudently violated the prejudices of the people, that the influence of the queen was vain. A secret will was made in favour of the Duke of Anjou, second son of the Dauphin, whose youth would, it was hoped, appease the jealousy of Europe.

Charles did not long survive this act: a few months showed the vacant throne which had been so anxiously expected. But no sooner was the intelligence of the king's death coupled with that of the will in favour of the Bourbons, than alarm spread throughout Europe. Louis seemed at first to hesitate between the will and the partition treaty—between family pride and selfish aggrandizement. His determination was, however, made to prefer the glory of giving a sovereign to an ancient rival, to the advantage of an accession of territory whose influence would be neutralized by the shares of other powers. Spain, under the grandson of Louis, and supported only by him against the ill-dissembled hostility of the rest of Europe, would be as much his own as if annexed to his kingdom, or governed by a viceroy. He, therefore, accepted the will; and the Duke of Anjou was crowned at Madrid by the title of Philip the Fifth, and publicly acknowledged as the sovereign of Spain.

Of the great European powers, the emperor alone

disputed his title. Leopold had been the greatest sufferer by the success of France, and he resolved to recover by arms what he had lost by want of policy. Prince Eugene took the field, and two decisive victories determined the fortune of the campaign. A.D. 1700.

Such was the state of affairs abroad: the domestic relations were no less critical and involved. Although the Whigs enjoyed the favour of the king, and had influence to procure majorities in the early parliaments, yet the Tories were still a powerful faction. They numbered in their ranks many of the most ancient and wealthy families in the kingdom; and if strict cordiality had bound them together, and prudence had taught them moderation in their designs, they might soon have undermined the influence of the Whigs, even at court. Gratitude compelled William to protect the party to whom he owed his kingdom; but he had that keen relish for power which monarchs have seldom been without, and the submissive doctrines of Toryism were, doubtless, more to his taste than the independent principles of the Whigs. The latter thought themselves entitled to all the favour, while they strove to circumscribe the prerogative of the new king. It was with indignation, therefore, that they saw some of the other party retained in office and power. Lord Danby, although he had been impeached as a corrupt and dangerous minister, had yet favoured and forwarded the revolution; the present king knew him therefore only as an adherent: but Halifax had been one of the most flagi- A.D. 1688 to 1700.

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tious ministers of Charles; Godolphin had seconded James in his most daring attempts, not even shrinking from the commitment of the bishops; and Nottingham had been the most conspicuous opponent of William when only a candidate for a vacant throne. That these men should be retained in places of trust and honour, aroused the indignation of the dominant party, and deepened the jealous watchfulness of their ordinary principles with the bitterness of disappointment and suspicion.

It was probably this evidence of the possibility of the Tories supplanting them, which induced them to delay passing the bill of indemnity. While the leaders of their enemies lay open to their impeachments, they were restrained from taking any very active part in opposition, or in making any very violent struggle for power. This weapon remained suspended over the heads of the Tories during the existence of the convention parliament: but, in the next, William put an end to their terror by sending down an act of grace. He was now more than ever willing to put the Tories upon an equality with their opponents, and to enable them to maintain a contest for power. The latter had just given a new instance of their suspicious watchfulness against the increase of the kingly power, by their conduct in the settlement of his revenues. Every preceding sovereign had enjoyed these for life; and William was so indignant at the settlement, which in fact condemned him to dependence upon his commons, that he was

at one time upon the point of throwing from him a sceptre which he declared that his subjects would not suffer him to wield. The document by which he intended to declare his abdication has come down to us; but the circumstances which altered his determination are not related.* The Whigs, therefore, were far from enjoying the confidence as fully as they did the favour of their sovereign, who was not sorry to find that the Tories were gradually gaining ground with his people.

In this temper William suddenly dissolved the parliament which elected him, and which, from the circumstance of its original informality, is usually called the convention parliament. This step at once lost him the affections of those who made him king, and appears to have been the result of the success of the endeavours of the Tories to persuade him that the Whigs were intent upon establishing a republic;—a persuasion sufficiently favourable to their views, but having little foundation in truth. The records we have of those times afford no evidence of any, even the most contemptible party, having such an object; and our sources of information are too numerous for such a party to have escaped our knowledge, had it ever existed.

The character of the new parliament was sufficiently shown by the election of their speaker. Sir John Trevor, who was now chosen to that office, was a violent Tory, whose high monarchical tenets

* Tindal.

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had procured him the patronage of the late king. By him he had been made master of the rolls; and he now undertook to procure a majority for the court, if sufficient sums were placed at his disposal. The system of governing by corruption was approved, and Trevor received his patent as first commissioner of the great seal.* The settlement of the revenues of the king was now completed; and although it still fell far short of what William thought he had a right to expect, it was less humiliating than that before proposed by the Whigs, and the Tories seemed secure in their power. Yet, subservient as that party now appeared to the views of William, and readily as they forwarded his schemes. we now know beyond a doubt that their professions were hollow and their designs treacherous; that they waited only an opportunity to dethrone the very monarch whose confidence they were courting, and to place upon his throne a king or a regent who would reassert their old and not yet forgotten dogmas of divine and indefeasible right. "I wish," said Lord Shrewsbury to William, "you could have established your party upon the moderate and honest-principled men of both factions; but as there be a

* This worthy was, it would appear, unable to bribe others without edifying them by his example. While he held the office of speaker, he was convicted of receiving a bribe of 1000*l.* from the city of London, for his services in getting a bill through the House; and was compelled to put the vote, that he had been guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour. The vote was carried, and Trevor was expelled.

necessity of declaring, I shall make no difficulty to own my sense that your majesty and the government are much more safe depending upon the Whigs, whose designs, if any, are improbable and remoter, than with the Tories, who many of them questionless would bring in King James, and the very best of them, I doubt, have a regency still in their heads: for although I agree them to be the properest instruments to carry the prerogative high, yet I fear they have so unreasonable a veneration for monarchy, as not altogether to approve the foundation yours is built upon."* That Lord Shrewsbury was right, the secret documents of that age which have since appeared abundantly testify. It is difficult to say who of those who offered their services to the exiled king were actuated by a sincere though mistaken loyalty, and who by a treacherous intention of meriting the favour of William by revealing the councils of St. Germain's; but it is certain that almost all the Tory and some even of the Whig peers maintained a correspondence with the late king, and that the hopes of the Tories were still centred in a restoration. The Whigs took advantage of this to unmask the new favourites, and to open the eyes of William to the danger of his situation. They produced in the upper house a bill for recognizing the title of the reigning sovereigns, and for declaring all the acts of the last parliament to be good and valid. This proposition, as had been foreseen by its proposers,

* Shrewsbury Correspondence.

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placed the Tories in a dilemma. If they opposed the bill, they at once declared themselves the enemies of the king they wished to propitiate; if they supported it, they blighted for ever their secret hopes, and abandoned the principles which were the distinguishing badge of their party.

The contest upon this bill was severe and protracted; modifications were offered and rejected—the measure was lost and regained, until at last, confounded by the argument that such a bill alone could secure the actors in the late revolution from the penalties of treason, the Tories reluctantly conceded the point; and the Whigs and the court, who had been again temporarily united, triumphed. The battle of the Boyne, which happened at this time, gave another blow to the influence of the Tories; and the Whigs now began to regain their majorities, both in the council and in the parliament.

The Tories were not the only part of the nation whom the revolutionary stain upon the escutcheon of William prompted to insincerity. Men of all classes seem to have been so atonished with the late occurrences, that they deemed a restoration inevitable. That a king, whose hereditary right was undisputed, who had exercised unchecked almost absolute dominion over a great people—a people unprone to act from momentary excitement, and recognizing in every grade that principle of honour which taught loyalty to their king and protection to his throne;—that a king apparently so firmly seated should fall

without a blow to the condition of an exile; and that a foreigner, whose temper and habits were diametrically opposed to the prejudices of the people he came to govern, should place himself upon his throne with as little struggle or dispute as if it had been the mere ordinary succession of a periodical magistracy,—appeared so wonderful to the spectators—nay, to the actors themselves—that, when reflection came, each trembled lest the day of retribution was at hand, and hastened by early overtures to claim merit with the banished prince. This dread, which pervaded all parties, is the only reason we can assign for the existence of a Jacobite party even among the Whigs. These mingled their liberal principles with their loyalty; and the name by which they were distinguished showed that they entertained the absurd design of *compounding* with James for a crown which, from their admission of his still retaining any claim to it at all, must have appeared to be in their eyes indefeasibly his. If the crown was not the inalienable property of a particular individual, the act of parliament which conferred it upon William for ever extinguished the title of any competitor: if it was so inalienable, that property could only rest in a divine right, and those who detained it from James were guilty of treason to their king and impiety to their God.

That Russel and Marlborough, the naval and military heroes of their day, participated in these intrigues, is now placed beyond a doubt. And we

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learn from the authority whence this certainty is derived,—that of James himself,—that while their co-operation was courted, their double perfidy was despised. Mr. Macpherson's Original Papers, containing the secret history of Great Britain from the Restoration to the Accession of the House of Hanover, were published in 1776. They have been collected with great care and industry, and their authenticity is undoubted. In them we have the original correspondence of the parties who were involved in the secret and intricate plottings of that period; and they introduce us to the recesses of many of those dark intrigues which have rendered this portion of our history so mysterious and uncertain.

In this collection we find copious extracts from an autobiography of James, which reveal the true character of many of William's apparently staunch supporters. With respect to the Duke of Marlborough, he writes: "Many begin to be dissatisfied with the Prince of Orange's government. The violent current which had borne everything before it abated; the hearts of many remained true, though their hands were tied; every day cleared up more and more the dark and hidden contrivances which had produced the revolution. The number of the king's friends increased daily; they proposed schemes for his restoration. The correspondence with Churchill was kept up: though his pretensions were liable to suspicion from his former conduct, his professions had the appearance of sincerity; there was some cause

to believe him, as both he and his mistress, the Princess Denmark, were out of favour with the Prince of Orange. Neither of them reaped any advantage from their past infidelity, but the infamy of having committed such great crimes. The most interested may be credited when they can reasonably hope to mend their fortune and better their condition by returning to their duty."*

This contempt and suspicion expressed for a man whom we are accustomed to look upon as one of the brightest characters in our history, may excite our astonishment and offend our prejudices; but the opinion of his old master was justly formed. Raised to rank and fortune by the bounty of James,—the loudest in his praises, the most obsequious in his service,—he was perhaps of all others the man in whom the infatuated monarch placed the most implicit confidence. Yet, no sooner did he see the storm approaching, than, while still making professions of the most devoted loyalty to his patron, he secretly corresponded with his enemy.† It was not, however, until the contest was in effect decided, and the fortunes of James grew desperate, that Churchill

* Macpherson, vol. i.

† This letter is a singular piece of Jesuitism; it runs thus:—

"August 4th, 1688.

"Mr. Sidney will let you know how I intend to behave myself: I think it is what I owe to God and my country. My honour I take leave to put into your highness' hands, in which I think it is safe. *If you think there is anything else that I ought to do, you have but to command me: I shall pay an entire obedience to it,* being

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openly avowed his treachery and ingratitude, and, followed by several officers of the highest rank, made good the desertion which he had long meditated. Those who would justify the betrayal of his benefactor as a sacrifice made to his country, must forget that such a motive might indeed well justify an opposition to arbitrary acts, but could never excuse or palliate deliberate treachery. Marlborough might well be justified, had he only refused to assist in forging again chains which an indignant people had broken; but neither gratitude nor honour can be reconciled with the indecent haste with which he grasped at the offices of privy-counsellor and lord of the bedchamber, and the miserable ambition which urged him to accept an earldom that was at once the reward and memorial of his dishonour.

Highly indeed must we rate military talent, if we hold it to cover conduct such as this. We cannot wonder that the betrayed king should require better security than such a man's word ere he again trusted him. He seems to have found some such security in the conduct of his daughter, Anne Princess of Denmark, over whom the duke and his duchess had at that time supreme influence. The princess

resolved to die in that religion which it has pleased God to give you both the will and power to protect."

This is the language of a man who, a few days afterwards, with many expressions of fidelity, accepted from James the command of five thousand troops to oppose the prince's progress to London; and, having vainly endeavoured to seduce, at length abandoned them. Posterity benefits by the treachery, but cannot applaud the traitor.

wrote her father a penitential letter, expressive of contrition for the undutiful conduct of which she had been guilty during the moment of his deepest distress, and craving his forgiveness and reconciliation. It is in the relation of the receipt of this letter that James convicts Russel also of treason to his trust. He says: "A person of the name of Lloyd brought this letter. Admiral Russel, who had the command of the English fleet, still pretended to be in the king's interest. He was dissatisfied with the king's declaration. There was a necessity of doing all that was possible to content a person who had the crown of England so far in his hands. Lloyd was Russel's particular friend. Russel had several conferences, before he came away, with the Princess of Denmark. He expressed his earnest desire to serve the king: he said the people were inclined enough to his side again, if the king would take a right line to continue them so: he advised him, if he wished to reign as a catholic king over a protestant people, he must forget the past, and grant a general pardon; and that, as for him, he made no stipulations for himself, saying it was the public good, and no private advantages, made him enter into this affair. He told him, therefore, that if he met the French fleet, he would fight it, were even the king himself on board; but that the method he proposed to serve the king was, by going out of the way with the English fleet.

"This was an odd way to restore the king, by

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fighting him. He, however, meant nothing but advantage to himself, as the preparations of the French made a restoration probable. He was determined to raise his fortunes, whichever way the balance inclined. Had the French passed by accident or prevailed by force, he would have made a merit of serving the king; and, should the contrary happen, he could easily keep his credit with the present government." *

The professions of these two great men were, however, followed by no action which could compromise their safety. Whenever they were urged by the impatient exiles of St. Germain's to any open demonstration, they hesitated and temporised; but when a secret opportunity presented itself of proving their good-will to the cause of James without danger to themselves, no sense of honour, no feeling of patriotism — not even the love of glory, could deter them from embracing it. Russel was the unwilling architect of his country's fortunes. The battle of La Hogue, which destroyed the navy of Louis, blighted for ever the hopes of the Stuarts. But Russel, although he monopolised the glory, had little share in the joy of the victory: his mind was rather busy to discover, how, having given so strong a pledge of loyalty to William, he should still preserve his credit with James. He succeeded in neutralizing much of the advantage so splendid a victory should have procured; and he gained, as his reward, the

* Macpherson, vol. i.

censure and contempt of the rivals, whom he at once courted and betrayed.

One of the means which Marlborough took to assure the court of St. Germain's of the sincerity of his adherence, was to give notice to James, and through him to Louis, of a secret expedition which was about to sail against Brest. The failure of the expedition, with the loss of the commander and eight hundred men, were the results of this communication.

We have dwelt upon the conduct of these two men, rather to illustrate the state of the kingdom at the time, than to exhibit particular acts of treachery. If men such as these, who enjoyed power and influence under the new dynasty, and who acted solely as they thought their interest directed them, without any very scrupulous regard to the claims of gratitude or the ties of honour; if such men are found in correspondence with the exiled king, surely it argues that the very atmosphere around the throne of William was surcharged with electric matter, and that a spark would suffice to have caused an explosion which must have laid in ruins the fabric it had cost so much wisdom and firmness to erect.

The mixed character of the ministries, and the various changes which took place in the sentiments of public men under William, render it difficult to give any concise and clear account of the state of parties in his reign. We have already seen sufficient to show us that political consistency was not a

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virtue then in high repute; and many of the leading statesmen of the day seem to have passed successively through every shade. The Jacobite principles which tainted, divided the factions; and a close review of their shifting combinations would lead us far from our path into a disquisition upon the views of the high-church and the moderate Tories, of the compounders and non-compounders, and many other shades of party, which agreed chiefly in the inveterate hostility with which they regarded each other, and the facility with which they concluded hollow and insincere unions whenever their interest prompted them.

We may, however, state the leaders of the Tory party to have been Rochester, Nottingham, Godolphin, and Marlborough. It may appear strange that we have placed in the ranks of the Tories two men who are known to posterity as the strenuous supporters, and even the chief support, of the Whig party: but it is no less an undoubted fact that, at the period of which we are now speaking, Godolphin and Marlborough were Tories. They were inveighed against by the Whig pamphlets; the Whig newspapers uniformly speak of them as belonging to the opposite faction; and it was by very gradual progression that they became alienated from the Tories, and not until they had secured the favour of the queen for the Whigs that they finally adopted that party. Even then they appear to have been actuated rather by resentment against the Tories, because

they so feebly seconded their views with regard to the war, than from any affection for their new allies, the heads of whom they strove anxiously to exclude from power, while they profited by their assistance.

These leaders of the Whigs were Somers, the most insurmountable obstacle to the Tories in their path to power, who was deservedly influential with the king, and almost alone fixed his wavering disposition to the maintenance of his Whig ministry, and who was not unaptly termed by Lord Sunderland, "the life and soul of his party;"* Wharton, equally distinguished by his talents and his dissipation; Orford, whose exploits as Admiral Russel have rendered his name one of the household words of Fame; Halifax, the most strenuous of the agents of the revolution, the president of the meeting of the lords which declared the abdication of James, and the speaker of their house in the convention parliament; Shrewsbury, honest and popular, but not free from a transient taint of the prevailing fault of coquetting with the Pretender; and Sunderland, who afterwards emulated the examples of less corrupted times, in sacrificing his private animosities to the love of his country.†

* Letter of Lord Sunderland to the King. Hardwick's State Papers, ii. 446.

† He had quarrelled with Lord Somers; but when he observed the unpopularity of the new Tory ministry, he wrote the letter to the King which I have above quoted, advising him to send immediately for Lord Somers, whom he speaks of as the only man capable of forming a ministry which might successfully oppose the measures the other party were then pursuing.

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The dissolution which produced the parliament of 1700 was occasioned by that vacillating policy which induced William to veer from party to party, according to the circumstances of his affairs. His ministry had become unpopular; the partition treaties had been disapproved by the intelligent part of his people; the parliament was indignant that, in an affair of such importance, its advice had not been required; and the commons were become obstinate and uncompromising. Alarmed at his situation, William looked anxiously around for more strenuous support; and the Tory leaders eagerly embraced the opportunity they saw open. Late events had given them popularity, to which, perhaps, the mere fact of their being in opposition added; and they now offered to manage the parliament so as to accomplish the designs of the king, provided he would part with those of his ministers who were most formidable to their party and most odious to the people. The first evidence of the king having thrown himself into their hands, was his taking the seals from Somers after vainly exhorting him to resign. The observant lawyer saw the danger approaching; but he chose rather to be formally dismissed, than to incur, by a timorous retreat, the imputation of cowardice or consciousness of guilt.

So critical, however, was the state of the kingdom, or so divided among themselves were the contending parties, that no known Tory stood forward to claim

the lead in the affairs of government; and even the seals which had just been taken from Somers were refused by several to whom they were offered, and remained for some time in commission. Perhaps this is partly to be ascribed to the caution of the king, who was willing to make terms with those whom he was about to introduce to his councils, and to stipulate for support in pursuing his expensive project* of acting as the arbiter and preserver of the balance of power upon the Continent. At last, however, his mind was determined. The Earl of Rochester promised the adherence of the Tories, and was made lord-lieutenant of Ireland. Lord Godolphin was placed at the head of the treasury; and other changes of minor importance were effected. But the management of the commons was intrusted to Harley, who had hitherto opposed all the measures of the court with such violence and ability, that his hostility was dreaded by the new ministry.

Like most of the conspicuous characters of his time, Harley had commenced his career in a very different character to that which he afterwards assumed. He was the representative of a family eminent for its presbyterian principles; and his edu-

* It was the ardour with which William was seconded in the pursuit of this favourite scheme, that produced the first germ of that national debt which has since grown to so unnatural a bulk. Perhaps it will be said, that the encumbrance has been most efficiently aided in its increase by the motives which gave it birth.

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cation and early conduct were in consonance with his extraction. He engaged with ardour in the furtherance of the revolution, and expected reward for his exertions in behalf of the party of his family. But his talents and his services were overlooked, and Harley learned henceforward to depend upon himself alone for advancement. Without entirely estranging himself from his early friends, he applied himself to secure the confidence of the high-church Tories; and although, from his temporizing policy, he never enjoyed the unreserved confidence of either party, yet he obtained such influence in both, that he was rightly considered by the new ministry as no small acquisition to their ranks.

The existing house of commons was, however, not of a character for the successful management of the new undertakers; nor did they design to attempt it, for the Whigs were still strong in their majority. Their first act was a dissolution; and that parliament was summoned in its stead, to which St. John was returned.

The government was now mixed in its party character, although the Whigs still retained the predominance; and no man could have been selected more adapted to negotiate between the parties than Harley, who had already proved his dexterity by attaching himself to both. The king considered his accession to the new government so important, that he did not scruple to use his personal influence to

procure his election as speaker. Sir Thomas Lyttleton, his most powerful opponent, declined the contest, at the request of the sovereign; and Harley then had a large majority over Sir R. Onslow, his only remaining competitor.*

* Tindal.

CHAPTER III.

Conduct of St. John in Parliament. — Death of the King.— Queen Anne favours the Tories.—Formation of a New Ministry.—St. John made Secretary at War.—His Conduct in Office.

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Such were the relations of the country abroad, and such the state of parties at home, when St. John commenced his political career. He entered immediately into all the views of Harley, and seconded him with zeal in their accomplishment. But we are not to suppose that he immediately attached himself unreservedly to the Tories, or was numbered among their staunch supporters. Harley's long-cherished design was to rise by a coalition of parties, which he flattered himself that he alone could bring about, and which he hoped that he alone would be able to direct. It was now his policy to support the measures of the Tories, who were in high popularity.

We have before mentioned that the junction of the dexterity of Harley with the brilliant talents of St. John gave the two friends an increased influence, which they determined to use, without bounding their views by the narrow confines to which a

strict adherence to either party might restrain them. Harley and St. John now shone the twin-star of the political heavens, and determined to pursue together an eccentric path to power; drawing to them in their transit all minor bodies which should come within the range of their influence.

At this period of our history, so bitter was party feeling, and so virulent political hatred, that the defeat of a ministry was generally followed by the impeachment of its members. The Tories, at the meeting of parliament, found they had a majority, which they increased by the most shameless partiality in the decision of election cases. Their first party measure was directed against the discarded ministers; and their conduct in negotiating the partition treaties was made the ground of a severe inquiry. The Earl of Portland, who was the prime manager of the negotiations, was the first to undergo their accusation; and Lords Somers, Orford, and Halifax, were afterwards included in the impeachment. In the divisions upon this measure, the vote of St. John swelled the small majorities by which the Tories succeeded. In the pursuit of power himself, and striving to raise himself by the fall of others, he seems to have had little compunction for the severity of the sentence he was inflicting; but when that severity recoiled upon himself, and he was smarting under the scourge himself had wielded, he could look back upon this measure, and condemn it, not only as severe, but also as unjust.

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In his Letters on History,* he says: "I have sometimes considered, in reflecting on those passages, what I should have done if I had sat in parliament at that time; and have been forced to own myself, that I should have voted for disbanding the army then, as I voted in the following parliament for censuring the partition treaties. I am forced to own this, because I remember how imperfect my notions were of the situation of Europe in that extraordinary crisis, and how much I saw the true interest of my country in a half light. But, my lord, I own it with some shame, because, in truth, nothing could be more absurd than the conduct we held."

The enemies of St. John have remarked, that, as the first measure to which he lent his aid was extreme and oppressive to individuals, so the second was of a tendency to subvert the liberties of the nation;—a remark which his support of the resolutions upon the Kentish petition perhaps merited and justifies. The violent proceedings of the new parliament, and their slowness with relation to foreign affairs, soon lost the Tories much of the transient popularity they had enjoyed, and gave almost as much disgust to the people as displeasure to the king. Large quantities of bullion had been lately imported from France; and the mercantile interest, which dreaded the union of that kingdom with Spain, and trembled for the stability of their commerce, did not scruple to assert that the torpor of

* Letter VIII.

the commons was occasioned by a liberal distribution of French gold among the members. The people's hereditary hatred of the French was aroused by publications, in which the louis-d'ors of Louis were compared to the silver spears of the Macedonian Philip; and it was asserted that there were not a few orators in the house whose golden quinseys influenced not only their voices, but their votes. The growing unpopularity of the commons produced, among other petitions, one from the grand jury and justices of Kent, in which the petitioners implored the house to suffer no pretence whatever to create a misunderstanding among themselves, or the least distrust of his most sacred majesty, whose great actions for this nation were writ in the hearts of his subjects, and could never, without the blackest ingratitude, be forgotten. They proceeded to recommend the house to turn their *loyal* addresses into bills of supply, that his most sacred majesty might be enabled powerfully to assist his allies before it was too late.*

Notwithstanding the undertaking of the Tories, the measures of this parliament had been far from satisfactory to the court; and the word 'loyal' introduced in this petition was supposed, and probably intended, as a sarcasm upon their conduct. Still there was nothing to justify any formal refusal of the petition, still less any proceedings against those from whom it emanated. But the dominant party in the house thought otherwise: they immediately

* Parl. Hist.

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resolved, "That the petition was scandalous, insolent, and *seditious*, tending to destroy the constitution of parliaments, and to subvert the established government of these realms." This violent resolution was followed by another yet more unexpected. The deputation who brought up the petition were committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms, and threatened with the severest penalties unless they repudiated their act. Their firmness gained them universal popularity, and fixed no less general odium upon the party which had perpetrated so daring an inroad upon the liberty of their countrymen.*

It is probable that St. John's eloquence in debate was first displayed in the house in support of these violent and unconstitutional resolutions. That he made himself conspicuous in the affair, we are assured; and that such conduct must have drawn upon him the execration of the people, is also certain. His early efforts, therefore, were little adapted to raise him into power upon the favour of the people: they seemed rather calculated to render him as unpopular for his politics as he had before been notorious for his vices.

This house of commons entered into a fierce controversy with the lords upon the subject of the impeachments; and its proceedings were so generally disagreeable to the court, that it was dissolved at the end of the session, and another summoned.

* Parl. Hist.

St. John still retained his seat for Wootton Bassett; a circumstance which shows that his family were not much offended by the line of politics he had chosen. This parliament was speedily terminated by the death of the king, which happened at a time when all his unquestionable abilities seemed requisite to guide the state vessel through the billows which assailed, and the breakers which threatened her.

With all his faults,—and he was not so free from them as some of his eulogists have endeavoured to show,—no Englishman can review his character or his reign without affection for the memory of a prince who banished for ever a family which has stained its annals with an uninterrupted series of atrocious tyranny and destructive civil wars; which, by its craving hunger after despotic power, awoke those slumbering passions in the people, which, once aroused, hearkened to no measure of moderation, but hurried them on to excesses as great as those they were called into action to withstand. William tore away the cancer which was twining itself among the vitals of the constitution; and by his prudent treatment so recovered the country from the shock it had sustained, that at his death every department of the government had recovered its former stability, and the crown descended in the course the law had pointed out, with as little hesitation or confusion as if Anne had been the immediate descendant of a dynasty of a hundred kings.

Although no one dared to raise his voice against

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the title of the new queen, there were not a few who viewed her accession with feelings of dismay. During the greater part of the former reign, the Whigs had enjoyed that power which their decided conduct, when decision only could have saved their country, had gained them: but now their empire was at an end. Anne had been educated among Tories, and she had strongly imbibed their principles. She had been taught to look upon the Whigs as a party holding tenets utterly incompatible with monarchy, subversive of the church, and destructive to religion. The prejudices she had conceived against their principles were not likely to be softened by the only personal opportunity she had had of judging of their practice. She attributed to their influence with the late king the disputes in which she had been involved with him, and the injuries which she conceived herself to have suffered at his hands. They it was who opposed the settlement upon her of a revenue suited to her rank and expectations; and it was they who wished to render her entirely dependent upon a king with whom she was openly at variance. The Tories, on the other hand, had befriended her in the contest: they had exerted themselves zealously in her cause, and had obtained for her terms more favourable than, from the spirit of the ministerial party, she could have expected. True, their motive was mere hostility to the king; but while that hostility manifested itself in her favour, she easily learned to sympathise with a party who

were her sole and efficient supporters. Her partiality was as openly avowed as it was reasonable. She held close correspondence with their leaders, and discovered the opinion she had formed of their conservative principles in matters of religion, by always speaking of them as the church party; a distinguishing epithet, which betrayed her suspicions of the designs of their opponents.*

It was not long ere this partiality was developed in her conduct. Before the six months had elapsed, which, by an act of the late king, had been fixed as the period of the duration of a parliament after a demise of the crown, she anticipated its dissolution by an exercise of her prerogative; and before another parliament was assembled, she determined to surround herself with counsellors more congenial to her taste.

We have seen that, during the reign of William, Anne and the Prince of Denmark were almost wholly under the control of the Earl and Countess of Marlborough: they had recourse to them in every difficulty, and they relied upon them to obtain support from the parties of the state. Marlborough dictated and inculcated her political creed, and drew her with him into his dark intrigues with the phantom court of St. Germain's. His influence was as great over the prince as over his consort; and the royal pair were as cordial in their political prepossessions as they were united in their private affec-

* Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough.

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tions. They had a common aversion to the Whigs, whom they believed to be their foes; a common friendship for the Tories, whom they knew to be their friends.

Not so Marlborough and his countess. The earl was at this time a staunch Tory; his lady had long been a partisan and intriguer for the Whigs. Nor were her means of advancing the views of that party slight. The influence she had over her mistress was immense; and the insolence with which she exercised that influence was as impolitic as it was unseemly. Had Anne been less firmly grounded in her prejudices, or more ductile in her disposition, she could hardly have withstood, upon one point, a woman to whom she ceded every other. But the countess, great as was her power,—and to the influential office of keeper of the privy purse she joined what seems the somewhat incongruous office of groom of the stole,*—could obtain no voice in the formation of the new ministry.

The distribution of the offices was confided to the Earl of Marlborough, who proved his moderation and wisdom by rejecting the violent claims of his own party. Insolent in their hour of triumph, they demanded that the Whigs should be entirely excluded from the cabinet, and revelled in the antici-

* Incongruous only in its sound. The superintendence of the royal wardrobe must, of course, vary with the sex of the sovereign. It is singular that the title remains unaltered.

pation of a long and undisputed supremacy. But Marlborough judged more wisely, that a coalition of parties would be better for the stability of the government and the interests of the country. He reserved for himself the personal conduct of the war, —a choice conducive to his own and his country's glory; but he determined to place at the head of the ministry a person whom he could depend upon to second him in his efforts, and to defend his measures in his absence. He made choice of the Earl of Godolphin, who was connected with him by marriage, and who was with difficulty prevailed upon to accept an office at least as arduous and dangerous as it was honourable. The new high treasurer was also at this time a zealous Tory.

The reason that the two leaders of this ministry afterwards abandoned their party, and sided with their opponents, is thus assigned by Tindal:—"The truth is, both these lords had been educated in the persuasion that the Tory parties were the best friends to the constitution both of church and state; nor were they perfectly undeceived but by experience." Perhaps a close examination of their whole conduct might convince an accurate observer that there were other, and, perhaps, more powerful motives operating to their conversion than a tardy conviction that the Tory party were not the best friends to the constitution. The Earl of Marlborough retained the title of captain-general of the forces, and Prince George of Denmark was named generalissimo of the allied

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armies. But this last appointment the ministry was obliged to rescind: the Dutch objected to his want of experience, and doubted whether the prince would submit himself to their directions in the management of the operations. Prince George readily agreed to relinquish a post for which he had little taste, and the dignity of lord high admiral was conferred upon him instead of that he resigned. Several other changes of minor importance were made; but in general, with these exceptions, the Whigs enjoyed the offices they held at the end of the last reign. Direct insult to the party was avoided. No Whig was ejected from his office; but every office which became vacant was invariably given to a Tory. Such was the origin and formation of the celebrated Godolphin administration.

In support of this ministry the eloquence of St. John shone, and the dexterity of Harley was displayed; but neither of them, in the first instance, received any advancement from it. Harley, indeed, retained his office of speaker of the house of commons. But this parliament, now that the arrangements had been completed, was about to be dissolved. It had spent the few months of its existence, which intervened between the death of the king and the dissolution, in discussions worthy of a private debating club rather than of the dignity of a national assembly. After the usual addresses had been voted to their new queen, and much critical acumen had been exercised upon her

answer, they took into their serious consideration some squibs and pamphlets that had appeared, reflecting; with the coarse personality which the custom of the time licensed, upon the measures of the late king's reign. But, not content with fixing the eyes of the nation upon every miserable piece of scurrility which issued from the press, they diligently examined every new work which appeared; and every passage derogatory to the fame of the king or the reputation of his ministers immediately underwent their censure. It was a singular view of a British house of commons, to see them erect themselves into a board of censors of the press, and issuing their mandates for the apprehension of every scribbler who had dared to differ in opinion from the majority of their body. We have a strange compound of divinity, literature, and trash, mingled together in their votes of censure. The most numerous are the published sermons of several divines; and the indignation of parliament is at once thundered against these: — Mr. Drake's History of Parliament; and "Tom Double returned out of the Country, or the True Picture of a Modern Whig, set out in a Second Dialogue between Mr. Whiglove and Mr. Double, at the Rummer Tavern in Queen Street."

But while the commons were amusing themselves in debating upon the precise terms in which they should express their disapprobation of these works, the queen and her ministry were deciding a more momentous question. Marlborough, who ruled her

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councils, held the humiliation of the French as the darling object of his life.

Louis had given a specious pretence for a declaration of war, by declaring the son of the deposed James to be the rightful heir to the throne, and by acknowledging him as King of England upon the death of his father. The war was undertaken upon the same principle as the glorious but unprofitable one which had just been concluded. It was to preserve the balance of power in Europe; and England, in assuming the office of judge, pledged her honour for the enforcement of her decrees. Godolphin had steadily opposed the former war: he had advised the late king to acknowledge the Duke of Anjou; and in 1701 he told him, that since his majesty was determined to engage in a war so contrary to his private opinion, he could serve him no longer; and accordingly gave up his appointment. It is to be feared that, in the present instance, Godolphin sacrificed his own opinion either to ambition or to his admiration of Marlborough, and gave his vote to provoke a contest which in his heart he disapproved.

Rochester, the late chief of the Tory party in the cabinet, proposed that England should avoid a declaration of war, and act only as an auxiliary; but the influence of Marlborough was all-powerful, and war was declared against France and Spain. The commons returned assurances of loyalty and support in answer to a communication of this event, and were soon after dissolved.

The elections for the new parliament were decidedly favourable to the ministry. It has been spoken of as an instance of moderation in Anne, that she did not openly interfere; but perhaps she took even more effectual measures to advance the interests of her favourite party. She made a tour through several parts of her kingdom, and her popular manners, so different from the repulsive taciturnity of her predecessor, raised an enthusiasm among the cities she visited in favour of herself and the ministers of her choice.* The queen's wish for a majority of Tories was sufficiently known, and at the meeting of the parliament they were found to be at least double the number of their opponents: "and," says the historian, "they met in full fury against the memory of the late king, and against those who had been employed by him." †

It is not for us to enter into a review of the measures of this parliament, or to canvass every ministerial measure which was brought before it. To record every vote which St. John gave, and the grounds upon which he voted, would be to give a detailed and uninteresting history of the period. It is sufficient to say, that having joined himself to the

* Oxford lay in her route, and there she was received with every manifestation of loyalty. Among other prominent characters in her suite St. John received an honorary doctor's degree from the university; a circumstance which bears honourable testimony to the estimation in which he was already held.

† Burnet.

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Tories, he zealously supported a ministry in which that party had so decided a majority.

If, however, we suppose that St. John, in numbering himself among the Tories, shared in those ultra principles which were then so confidently attributed to that party;—if we suppose him inimical to the late revolution, regarding the act of settlement as a violent and invalid invasion of the rights of the Stuarts, and nursing in his heart those darling tenets of divine right and irresponsible and indefeasible authority;—if we suppose him a Jacobite either in heart or profession,—we very much mistake his sentiments, and do injustice to the power of his comprehensive mind. That the mind of St. John was shackled by no such dogmas, appears from every page of his works. The pen of Junius could hardly have traced these tenets to more absurd conclusions, than does Bolingbroke in his Dissertation on Parties, where his subject leads him directly to their discussion.

"The disputes," he says, "about the words abdicate or desert, and about the vacancy of the throne, were in truth fitter for a school than a house of parliament; and might have been expected in some assembly of pedants where young students exercised themselves in disputation, but not in such an august assembly as that of the lords and commons met in solemn conference upon the most important occasion. The truth is, that they who formed the opposition were reduced to maintain strange para-

doxes—stranger, in my opinion, than those which cast so much ridicule upon the stories of old. Thus, for instance, they were forced to admit that an oppressed people might seek their remedy in resistance, for they had sought it there themselves; and yet they opposed making use of the only remedy which could effectually secure them against returns of the same oppression when resistance had put it in their power, as oppression had given them the right to use this remedy. Surely this must appear a paradox—and a very absurd one too,—if we consider that resistance in all such cases is the mean, and future security the end; and that the former is impertinent—nay, wicked in the highest degree,—if it be not employed to obtain the latter. Thus, again, the same men declared themselves willing to secure the nation against the return of King James to that throne which he had abdicated, or, according to them, deserted. Nay, some of them were ready, if we may credit the anecdotes of that time, to proceed to such extreme resolutions as would have been more effectual than justifiable in the eyes of mankind; and yet they could not prevail on their scrupulous consciences to declare the throne vacant.

"They had concurred in the vote, that it was inconsistent with the laws, liberties, and religion of England, to have a papist rule over the kingdom. King James had followed the pious example of Sigismund; who, not content to lose the crown of Sweden himself for his religion, had carried his son away, that

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he might be bred a papist, and lose it too: and yet they maintained, though they did not expressly name him, that if the throne was then or should be at any time vacant of the father, it must be reputed instantaneously full of the son, upon the foundation of this silly maxim, that the king never dies.

"According to this law and these politics, King James and his successors to the twentieth generation might have continued abroad, a race of royal exiles, preserving their indefeasible right to govern, but debarred from the exercise of it; whilst the nation continued during all this time from century to century under the dominion of regents, with regal authority, but without any regal right—an excellent expedient sure to keep the monarchy in an hereditary succession. But there remained none better on the principles of these men, since the Prince of Orange had committed the fatal oversight of neglecting to conquer the nation. His sword would have cut the gordian knot of hereditary right, and they could have submitted with safe consciences to the conqueror.

"But to give the crown to a prince, though they had put the whole administration into his hands,—which, by the way, was high treason, unless the throne was, what they denied it to be, actually vacant;—to give the crown, I say, to a prince who would not take it when it was in his power to take it without their consent; to settle a new government by agreement and compact, when the glorious opportunity of establishing it by force and conquest

had been unhappily lost;—these were propositions to which they could not consent.

"King James had violated the fundamental laws which he had promised over and over, and sworn, to maintain. He had shown by his first escape, when nothing more was imposed on him than to wait the resolution of a free parliament, that he would renounce his crown rather than submit to secure effectually the observation of these laws. He had made a second escape, which was voluntary as well as the first, and made on the same principle, against the intreaties of his friends and the instigations of the same council as had directed his former conduct, and on a letter from the queen, claiming his promise to do so.

"Notwithstanding all these reasons they who maintained the hereditary right of our kings, reduced themselves, and would have reduced their country, to the absurd necessity of altering the constitution under pretence of preserving it. No king except a Stuart was to reign over us; but we might establish a doge, a lord archon, a regent; and thus these warm asserters of monarchy, refusing to be slaves, contended to be republicans. Many more paradoxes of equal extravagance might be cited which were advanced directly, or which resulted plainly, from the arguments employed on one side of the question in those disputes: but the instances I have cited may suffice for our present purpose, and may serve to show, that although difficulties hard to solve in speculation or to remove in practice will arise in

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the pursuit of the most rational principles, yet such absurdities as these can never arise except from the most irrational, and always must arise from such." *

Such were the sentiments of St. John; and such is the language of our constitution. That he held these views in common with many of the Tory party, is undeniable; but that there was a numerous sect among them who avowed the tenets he ridicules and despised, is equally true. The adherents of St. John were, however, the leaders of the party: it was their privilege to govern, and their task to defend. We learn their sentiments from the grounds upon which they defended the measures they proposed; and he who examines the conduct of the Godolphin ministry must admit that their measures were generally as wise as their sentiments were moderate.

The talents of St. John had now met with opportunity for their development, and he was unquestionably ranked as one of the leading speakers of this parliament. His support upon all important questions was always valuable, sometimes decisive. We find him conspicuous in the stormy debates upon the occasional uniformity bill, and afterwards one of the managers for the commons in the conferences and disputes between the houses which that measure induced. It was not long before the importance of his assistance compelled the reluctant leaders of his party in the cabinet to secure his co-operation by allowing him a share in the government.

* Dissertation on Parties, Let. viii.

The ministry, composed of Tories of every shade, had not long continued to act together, before they discovered that the views of several of the sections were diametrically opposed. In the year 1704, these divisions became more determined in their character, and terminated in the defection of the high-church party, as they were now called, or the ultra Tories; who were accused of serious designs in favour of the pretender, and were found by the minister completely unmanageable.

The Earl of Rochester, who was the queen's uncle, and had at the formation of the ministry been appointed lord-lieutenant of Ireland, became disgusted with the measures of Marlborough, and was piqued by the advancement of Godolphin to the office which he himself had before held: he therefore early retired from the administration, and his office was given to the Duke of Ormond. But now the Earl of Nottingham, who was secretary of state, and the great support of the high-church party, demanding the dismissal of those who opposed his views, the queen chose rather to accept his own resignation. This was followed by that of his adherents; and several posts were thus vacated.

To the most important of these offices it was determined to advance Harley. Not that either Marlborough or Godolphin viewed him with particular favour, or counted upon him as an attached adherent: but that dexterity to which we have before adverted, which had enabled him to vote with the Tories,

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and hold the office of their speaker in the commons, without losing the connexion of the Whigs, pointed him out as a valuable ally in the present emergency. Godolphin had been weakened by the defection of the ultra Tories; he now wished to conciliate the Whigs. This he dared not do openly without hazarding the immediate dissolution of his administration; but he was willing to avoid giving them unnecessary offence by appointing to the vacant office a man who still retained some connexion with them.

Harley, therefore, succeeded the Earl of Nottingham in the secretaryship; and St. John was at the same time made secretary at war, in the room of Mr. Blaithwaite. It has been doubted whether St. John owed this his first appointment solely to his reputation in parliament, or whether he was not rather indebted it for to the influence of the new secretary. There are many circumstances which incline us to attribute his advancement to the exertions of his friend, especially since we may do so without ascribing to Harley more disinterested friendship than his contemporaries have allowed him to be capable of evincing.

Harley had, indeed, succeeded in retaining a connexion with both of the great parties in the state, but at the expense of a sacrifice of character which usually attends such undecisive and temporizing conduct. He was patronized by both; but he was trusted by neither. The Whigs recom-

mended him to office because he was the only avowed Tory who promised to assist them to rise again to the place of power whence they had fallen; the Tories received him because he procured them the essential assistance, or at least the neutrality, of the Whigs.

Harley was a man of too much penetration not to perceive that he was merely made use of, and that when the occasion which rendered him useful had passed, he would be dismissed and forgotten. This was his moment of prosperity, and he resolved to improve it, to bring into the ministry with him two friends upon whose fidelity he could rely, and whose influential talents would give weight and importance to the coalition. The early adherence and rising fame of St. John sufficiently designated him as one of this nucleus of a new party: Sir Simon Harcourt was the other. The one, we have seen, was made secretary at war; the other was appointed attorney-general.

Others have attributed the early advancement of St. John to the favour of Marlborough, who, it is known, entertained sentiments of esteem and friendship for him which no after political differences could shake. The friendship between Marlborough and St. John appears to have been reciprocal. While the young statesman admired the hero of his age, the earl returned his reverence with affection; and long afterwards, upon the death of an only son, was heard to declare that St. John was now the only

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consolation that remained to him.* That the friendship of so powerful a man should facilitate the advancement of St. John to a seat at the council-board, is doubtless probable. But from the manner in which he had already united his fortunes with those of Harley, and from his conduct upon the dismissal of that minister, it appears rather to be believed that Harley made the appointment of St. John and Harcourt the condition upon which alone he would accept office.

Afterwards, when the tortuous mazes of court intrigue had separated men who had long been confederates, and when party jealousy had converted old friends into rancorous foes, Bolingbroke indignantly denied that subserviency or inferiority had ever been felt or acknowledged by St. John. With regard to Harley's accusations of ingratitude, he asks, "Whose circumstances most demanded, whose family most required, an increase of wealth and fortune; those of the accused, or those of the accuser? Who hath given greater proofs of avarice to gather, and profusion to squander; the accused, or the accuser?" Again: "His ingratitude and treachery to the late Duke of Marlborough and the Earl of Godolphin stand first in the roll of his sins. I believe no man acknowledges more sincerely than he the superior merit of these two illustrious men, or wishes more ardently that they were now alive and had the conduct of the affairs of Great Britain; but I know no obligations of gratitude or honour which he lay

* Macpherson, vol. ii.

under to continue in their administration when the measures of it were altered. They might have reasons—perhaps good reasons—for altering their measures: he could have none in point of honour, whatever he might have had in point of interest, for complying with that alteration. Some of the enemies of this gentleman came into the world on such a foot, that they might think it preferment to be the creatures of any men in power. He, who came into it upon another foot, was the friend, but not the creature, of these great men."*

Whatever might have been the influence which placed St. John in the administration, he certainly applied himself with diligence to the efficient discharge of the duties he had undertaken. His friendship for Marlborough was not the mere interchange of hollow professions: of such dissembling St. John was incapable. His temper was sincere almost to rashness, and where his co-operation was promised, it was given with zeal and conducted with ability. Marlborough was his friend, and he served him with fidelity; he supplied him abundant succours abroad, and he defended his conduct at home. It was during the administration of St. John that the duke achieved some of his most glorious exploits. At this time the victories of Blenheim and Ramelies immortalized the name of the soldier, and placed another brilliant in the diadem of his country's glory. St. John had been assiduous to strengthen

* Letter in the Craftsman.

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him for the struggle; he was now ardent to reward his success:—he introduced and carried through the commons the bill which conferred Woodstock upon the duke and perpetuated it in his family; and he secured to him other advantages scarcely less acceptable.

To direct the energies of the nation in support of the war, and to announce the triumphs of her arms, were the peculiar province of St. John; but his activity was equally conspicuous in the other departments of the government. His eloquence was ever ready, his assistance always efficient; and often did the ministers, when discomfited in debate, find protection from the war of words behind the impregnable shield of St. John.

We have seen that Harley was originally introduced into the ministry to conciliate the Whigs, and that St. John came in to strengthen the influence of Harley. The Whigs had supposed that, owing his advancement to their recommendation, he would be devoted to their interest; but Harley was ambitious of power, and scorned to be the passive tool they intended to make him. The Whigs soon discovered that they had more favour to expect from the minister who needed their support than from their old ally. The desertion of the high-church party had in fact determined Marlborough and Godolphin to a gradual change. They had almost alone supported the Tories; they now resolved to become the leaders of the Whigs.

CHAPTER IV.

Godolphin's Jealousy of the designs of Harley.—Influence of the Marlboroughs upon the decline.—Harley ingratiates himself with the Queen.—His Intrigues with Mrs. Hill.—Dismissal of Harley.—St. John resigns his Office.

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THE change in the political sentiments of Marlborough and Godolphin was chiefly brought about by jealousy of the designs of Harley, who, brought in only to serve their purposes, had with consummate skill obtained a complete influence over the queen, and contrived to make her withdraw all confidence from her ministers. These court intrigues were the immediate causes of St. John's temporary disgrace, but eventual supremacy: they form, therefore, an important part of his history, although they were conducted almost exclusively by Harley.

The disposition of Anne was peculiarly susceptible of flattery, and prone to induce her to allow those who studied her pleasure an unrestricted influence over her conduct. During the reign of William, she had been entirely guided by the Earl of Marlborough and his countess. Their influence continued after she had ascended the throne; and one of the first acts of her reign was to create Marlborough a

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duke. Her partiality for her friend, who had not then achieved those exploits which afterwards silenced his enemies, exceeded that of her commons, who refused to concur in some grants which she proposed to confer upon him. His duchess was the most favoured of her female attendants; and, together, the influence of the Marlboroughs was all-potent. Long enjoyment induced a security which alone could have afforded an opportunity for opposing favourites so firmly established. The close attendance and the constant adulation which had raised them to power became irksome when the object was gained; and while the attentions of the duchess became less assiduous, her tone of remonstrance or advice became more haughty. In order that she might retain an undisputed ascendency over her mistress while she relieved herself from the necessity of personal attendance upon her, she introduced into her service a Mrs. Abigail Hill, who, being a creature of her own, she considered as entirely devoted to her.

The Duchess of Marlborough was herself the most scheming and successful practiser of court intrigue of her day. But in this instance she was fatally foiled; and a discovery of the arts by which she had been herself outwitted, seems so have led her to indulge in moral reflections, which seldom intruded while those arts were only employed in furtherance of her own designs. Since she was unquestionably the victim of ingratitude, she may be allowed to relate the history of this transaction her-

self. "It was about this time," she says, "that I discovered the base returns made me by Mrs. Masham, upon whom I had heaped the greatest obligations. The story of this lady, as well as of that gentleman who was her great adviser and director, is worth the knowledge of posterity, as it will lead them into a sense of the instability of court favour, and of the incurable baseness which some minds are capable of contracting.

"Mrs. Masham was the daughter of one Hill, a merchant in the city, by a sister of my father. Our grandfather, Sir John Jenyns, had two-and-twenty children; by which means the estate of the family, which was reputed to be about 4000*l.* a year, came to be divided into small parcels. Mrs. Hill had only 500*l.* to her portion. Her husband lived very well, as I have been told, for many years, till, turning projector, he brought ruin upon himself and his family. But as this was long before I was born, I never knew there were such people in the world, till after the Princess Anne was married, and when she lived at the Cockpit; at which time an acquaintance of mine came to me, and said she believed I did not know I had relations who were in want; and she gave me an account of them. When she had finished her story, I answered, that indeed I had never heard before of any such relations; and immediately gave her ten guineas out of my purse for their present relief, saying I would do what I could for them. Afterwards, I sent

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Mrs. Hill more money, and saw her. She told me that her husband was in the same relation to Mr. Harley as she was to me; but that he had never done anything for her.

"I think Mrs. Masham's father and mother did not live long after this. They left four children, two sons and two daughters. The elder daughter, afterwards Mrs. Masham, was a grown woman. I took her to St. Albans, where she lived with me and my children; and I treated her with as great kindness as if she had been my sister. After some time, a bedchamber-woman of the Princess of Denmark died; and as in that reign, (after the princesses were grown up,) rockers, though not gentlewomen, had been advanced to be bedchamber-women, I thought I might ask the princess to give the vacant place to Mrs. Hill. At first, indeed, I had some scruples about it; but this being removed by persons I thought wiser, with whom I consulted, I made the request to the princess, and it was granted. As for the younger daughter (who is still living), I engaged my Lord Marlborough, when the Duke of Gloucester's family was settled, to make her laundress to him; which was a good provision for her. And when the Duke of Gloucester died, I obtained for her a pension of 200*l.* a year, which I paid her out of the privy purse: and in some time after I asked the queen's leave to buy her an annuity out of some of the funds; representing to her majesty, that as the privy purse money produced no interest, it would be

the same thing to her if, instead of the pension to Mrs. Hill, she gave her at once a sum sufficient to purchase an annuity; and that by this means her majesty would make a certain provision for one who had served the Duke of Gloucester. The queen was pleased to allow the money for that purchase; and it is very probable that Mrs. Hill has the annuity to this day, and perhaps nothing else,—unless she saved money after her sister had made her deputy to the privy purse, which she did as soon as she had supplanted me." *

The duchess goes on to show how she provided for all the rest of this family; summing up the favours she conferred, to increase our sense of the ingratitude with which they were repaid. She tells us, that she got the eldest brother a situation in the customs; and took the second, who was a tall boy all in rags, and who was afterwards called by the bottlemen 'Honest Jack Hill,' under her protection, and sent him to school. Honest Jack Hill afterwards rose, by his sister's interest, to be a general; and the duchess cannot sufficiently express her resentment, that when Mr. Harley attacked the Duke of Marlborough in parliament, this once ragged boy whom she clothed, happening to be sick in bed, was nevertheless per-

* Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough. This work was written by Hooke, under the immediate superintendence of the duchess. It is said that he received 5000*l.* for his performance. Hooke was a diligent compiler, but a poor writer.

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suaded by his sister to get up, wrap himself in warmer clothes than those he had received from his benefactress, and go down to the house to vote against her husband.

"As for Mrs. Masham herself," she continues, "I had so much kindness for her, and had done so much to oblige her, without ever having done anything to offend her, that it was too long before I could bring myself to think her other than a true friend, or forbear rejoicing at any instance of favour shown her by the queen. I observed indeed, at length, that she was grown more shy of coming to me, and more reserved than usual when she was with me; but I imputed this to her peculiar moroseness of temper, and for some time made no other reflections upon it."

The first circumstance which opened the eyes of the duchess to the plot which was so covertly laid to supplant her, was the discovery that Mrs. Hill had contracted a private marriage at which the queen was present. She was immediately alarmed that this should have been industriously concealed from her, who had been usually consulted upon the most ordinary movements of her royal mistress. It was the circumstances attendant upon this marriage which gave Harley so absolute an influence over the new favourite, and enabled him by her means to execute the ambitious designs he had in view.

Harley, although he had neglected his relation when she was in want of his assistance, was assiduous in his attentions now that she could be of

use to him in his projects. The most fulsome flattery was lavished upon a woman who was not less influenced by it herself because she was in the habit of exercising it upon others; and so thoroughly was Harley master of the arts of dissimulation and address, that he soon insinuated himself into her entire confidence, and drew from her a secret which he well knew how to turn to his own advantage.

Mrs. Hill, if we receive the somewhat suspicious testimony of her indignant benefactress, was possessed of few personal charms, and still fewer intellectual endowments. She represents her as ordinary in person and morose in disposition, except when her interest compelled her to restrain or dissemble her natural temper. We know that her hopes of fortune were confined to the expectations she might entertain from the favour of the duchess. Mrs. Hill, therefore, was not likely to make any impression upon the gallants of the court. She had fixed her affections upon a gentleman much younger than herself, a Mr. Masham, then page to the queen. But she appears to have distrusted her own powers of fascination to obtain for her the object of her preference; and she communicated her passion and her despair to her sympathizing cousin. In obtaining this secret, Harley rightly imagined that he had a means of establishing a strong claim upon her favour; and he made her concurrence in his plans the price of his assistance. He employed a veteran courtier to break the matter to Masham, who aroused

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the young man's ambition, and fed it with the most magnificent promises. Harley's plan succeeded: Mrs. Hill became Mrs. Masham; the queen was present at the private marriage, and Harley and the bride had already advanced far in the prosecution of their common purpose. Whether the gratification of her passion inspired her with a gratitude which no other kindnesses could kindle, or whether she found that her own interests and those of Harley were identified, it is unnecessary to inquire: certain it is, that Mrs. Masham became entirely subservient to her new ally. The duchess, secure in her opinion of her relation's fidelity, had frequently been absent from the court for several weeks together; and these opportunities were not lost by her treacherous rival. Gradually her absence was less remarked, and her presence less desired; so successful had been the waiting-woman's endeavours to ingratiate herself with her mistress. All her influence was now employed to prepossess the queen in favour of Harley, and to give him frequent access to her presence. Once admitted, the address of the courtier soon won the confidence of his weak and unsuspecting mistress.* He entertained her with conversation most adapted to please a woman's ear; now detailing the

* Bolingbroke bears testimony to Harley's insinuating address. In his ironical dedication of his Remarks on the History of England to him, he compares him to the serpent of the Old Testament:—"Where anything was to be got, he could wriggle himself in; when any misfortune threatened him, he could find a way to wriggle himself out"

trifling topics of interest, and the secret gallantries of her court; now descanting in strains of polished adulation upon the happiness and devoted loyalty of her people. So attached did Anne become to his society, that she often remained long after her usual hour of rest closeted with him and her new favourite.

She was afflicted with a complaint which affected her eyes, and Prince George was supposed to allude to these secret conversations, when he remarked in the house of lords, that "the queen would never be better while she kept such late hours:" a remark which occasioned much speculation among the courtiers. At these interviews no opportunity was neglected of instilling into her mind an affection for the high Tory doctrines, and a hatred of the principles of the Whigs. These latter were constantly represented as a sect whose hopes were centred in a republic, and whose principles and practice were alike hostile to the existence of monarchy. Such sentiments are always attractive to a sovereign; and it is not surprising that the weak-minded Anne easily confided in those who maintained them. Her ministers found they had lost her confidence before they discovered by whom they had been supplanted. In furtherance of their design of gradually introducing the Whigs, they had proposed to make the Earl of Sunderland one of the secretaries of state; but this the queen strenuously and for some time obstinately opposed. Like many persons who are diffi-

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dent of their own resolution, she was accustomed to prepare herself for an unpleasant altercation with her advisers, by fixing upon a single sentence in which to declare her determination, and giving no other answer to every effort to shake her resolve, than a repetition of the same words. This mode of opposition at once precluded all possibility of obtaining from her the grounds of her refusal, or the names of the parties who had prompted it. Her consent to the appointment of Sunderland was not obtained until those who secretly guided her feared lest their designs should be prematurely developed; they then permitted her acquiescence. But some ecclesiastical preferments which were soon after bestowed upon Tories, and the appointment of Sir Simon Harcourt, the strict ally of Harley and St. John, and the then solicitor-general, to the vacant office of attorney-general, gave the Whigs new uneasiness; and they began to suspect the ministers of treachery, when, in fact, these measures were taken against their consent and in defiance of their opposition. The secret council was obliged again to give way; and the queen was permitted to promise that she would bestow no more favours upon the Tories.

While Harley was engaged in these intrigues, and secretly alienating the mind of his sovereign from his colleagues, he was openly manifesting towards them the most unreserved friendship and cordiality The letters which he was at this time constantly writing to Godolphin and Marlborough teem with

expressions of fidelity and attachment: the Duchess of Marlborough has preserved several, which contain the warmest professions of sincerity, and fully justify her censure of a man who could pretend entire devotion to his colleagues while he was engaged in a scheme of deliberate treachery against them. He appears at one time to have felt that he was suspected, for we find him protesting to Marlborough—"I serve you by inclination and principle; and a very little time will make that manifest, as well as that I have no views or aims of my own."* Such instances of deliberate falsehood incline us to believe in the existence of those dark traits which his enemies declare pervaded the character of Harley, but which we should have discredited did they rest only upon their testimony.

How far St. John was implicated in these intrigues, it is difficult to decide. That he took no active part in them, is to be inferred from the silence of the duchess, and the frankness of his disposition, which would disqualify him for a task of such profound dissimulation. But that he was entirely ignorant of what was going on, we can hardly believe, when we consider the close connexion which existed between him and Harley, and how nearly he was interested in the continuance of his friend's influence at court. If St. John was privy to the secret correspondence which was carried on behind the throne,

* Cited by the Duchess of Marlborough in her Defence of her Conduct.

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he must be considered as sharing in the guilt of duplicity and ingratitude which has attached to Harley. He had courted and enjoyed the affection of Marlborough; he had gained the confidence of Godolphin. If we are to suppose of him that he sought affection only to betray,—that he courted confidence only that he might abuse it, we fix a stigma upon his memory which no talents can brighten and no virtues efface.

But much may be said to show that he had a very faint and indistinct knowledge of the tactics of his coadjutor. A participation in these schemes was never urged against him by his political adversaries, although they did not forget to tax him with other actions with regard to Marlborough and Godolphin which do not bear out the charge of ingratitude they were adduced to support. If they accused him of ingratitude for raising himself into a seat which his friends had resigned, they could not have believed that he had been caballing against them while they retained it, and that they had been driven from it by his arts. St. John never confessed that he had any part in this business: he always speaks of it as the intrigue of Harley; and the jealousy and reserve which were so prominent in the character of that statesman, and were the fruitful source of misunderstanding between him and St. John, lend strength to the presumption, which is raised by the silence of his enemies and his own denial.

The treachery in the cabinet and in the palace were discovered about the same time. The duchess says her suspicions were aroused by Mrs. Masham bursting unceremoniously into the royal presence while she was closeted with the queen, and retiring in confusion when she discovered who was with her. The obstinacy of their mistress, and her aversion to the Whigs, had before aroused the suspicions of Godolphin, and he had written to the duchess to tell Mrs. Masham not to speak upon business to the queen. But the mischief was now done; the plot was matured, and Harley might now have bid defiance to his late patrons as securely as Mrs. Masham did to her benefactress. His colleagues peremptorily required his dismissal, and the queen as firmly refused. It is said that upon this occasion the affection of Anne revived for the Marlboroughs—that she would have gladly accepted the resignation of Godolphin, but she could not resolve to give up the duke;—that now the duchess made one desperate effort to retrieve the favour she had lost, and at this interview she was as abject in her humiliation as she had before been haughty in her presumption;—that the timid queen, distracted by the contests of her attendants and affected by the tears of her friends, resigned the point, and reluctantly withdrew her protection from her secret adviser. But it is not probable that the web which Harley had woven around her was so easily to be broken. We are told that she would hear no ill of him; that she

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discredited every attempt which was made to injure him in her esteem. She denied that she had ever been a party to any secret negotiations, or had allowed Harley to use her name in any schemes he had on foot for the formation of a new ministry, of which himself was to be the head. The duchess says that her reception was cold and forbidding, and complains that she sent her away without a kind look. Perhaps we are rather to seek the cause of the temporary success of the Whigs—for Marlborough and Godolphin are henceforward to be ranked among that party—in the prudence or the ambition of Harley. A dismissal from office would enable him to carry on his opposition openly; and his influence in the palace assured him that he should do so successfully.

Other circumstances also conspired to convince him that it was prudent for him to retire for a season from a conspicuous post. Among these, the most powerful was the discovery and execution of Gregg, who was convicted of carrying on a treasonable correspondence with the courts of France and St. Germain's. The circumstances were these:—Letters to M. Chamillard, the French prime minister, were accustomed to be transmitted to him through the secretary's office, in compliance with the courtesy usually observed among civilized belligerents. These letters were of course sent to the secretary open, and related only to indifferent subjects. Upon some suspicion which was excited in the authorities in Hol-

land, the packet was stopped, and the letters reopened, by which the discovery was made that there was a person in the secretary's office who was carrying on a regular correspondence with the enemy, and that through him, the secret instructions of the ministry to the allies were known at Versailles long before the originals reached their destination. In the letter which was seized, the writer boasted of his means of procuring information, and promised yet more important services if well encouraged. This letter was forwarded to the Duke of Marlborough, who instituted an immediate search for the author. The handwriting appeared to be that of one Gregg, a man whom Harley had negligently taken into his confidence, without proper inquiry into the circumstances of his former life—nay, with the knowledge that his character had been far from pure. Harley had used him as a spy; and he executed his commissions so much to the satisfaction of his employer, that he, with a strange want of judgment, enabled him to practise upon himself the perfidy which he had rewarded him for practising upon others. Gregg did not attempt to deny his guilt: on the contrary, actuated probably by a hope of pardon, he confessed the facts with which he was charged, and pleaded guilty upon his trial. It is said that the ministers offered Gregg a pardon if he would denounce his companions in the transaction, hoping to convict Harley of a participation in his guilt. Swift afterwards accused them of having gone yet farther, and

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asserts that they attempted to bribe him to accuse his master.* Gregg, however, was proof against the temptation: he answered, that he would rather die than live a life of infamy—and he did die. The enemies of the secretary, on the other hand, said that Gregg was sustained in his resolution by the continual assurances of pardon which Harley held out to him, and that he dropped some expressions when upon the scaffold, complaining of the manner in which he had been deceived. Both these tales are probably mere inventions of party malice: the latter appears improbable in itself.

This was not the only circumstance which happened at the time to show the truth of the assertion of the Duchess of Marlborough, that the department of Harley was miserably mismanaged. He had employed two men, named John Bara and Alexander Valière, as spies to bring him intelligence from France, and had given orders at the outports that they should be allowed to pass without inquiry. It was soon suspected by the officers upon the coast that these men conveyed much more information to

* In No. xxxii. of the Examiner, speaking of Guiscard's attempt, he says, "And here it may be worth observing how unanimous a concurrence there is between some persons once great in power and a French papist: both agreeing in the great end of taking away Mr. Harley's life, though differing in their methods; the first *proceeding by subornation*, the other by violence." The same accusation is repeated in No. xxxiii., and was answered by other publications at the time.

the enemy than they brought respecting him, and frequent remonstrances were addressed to the secretary upon the subject. He, however, was confident in their fidelity, and treated with indifference every attempt to arouse his suspicions. At length the presumptions against them became so violent, that the authority of the secretary was no longer able to protect them. They were seized, and subjected to the examination of the seven lords who were appointed to examine Gregg. These examinations, which appear at length in the parliamentary history of the time, clearly show that they were engaged in a treasonable correspondence with the enemy; but they furnish no evidence whatever to implicate Harley in the transaction, or to subject him to any other charge than that of gross negligence. But negligence in a man holding his situation amounts to crime.

These circumstances, happening at so critical a moment, were well calculated to destroy his popularity with the nation and to shake his credit at court. The organs of the ministry impressed the people with a conviction of his guilt; but they were without influence with Anne. She received the account of the occurrence from his own lips, and was convinced that he had become an object of persecution, only because he was devoted to her service.

Harley had therefore probably determined already to withdraw; and the queen only acquiesced in his wishes when she appeared to yield to her ministry.

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He knew also, that however willing she might be to support him against the rest of her cabinet, she was at present incapable of realizing her wish. Upon receiving the resignation of Marlborough and Godolphin, she had treated them with coolness, and seemed determined to do without them; but the conduct of her council, which met immediately after, had convinced both her and her adviser of their error. They refused to proceed to business, and gave her plainly to understand, that if Marlborough and Godolphin were dismissed, the administration was dissolved. For so bold a step as the breaking up of a government so efficient and popular as that of Godolphin's, Anne was not yet prepared; and she reluctantly accepted the resignation of Harley, exclaiming against the hard fate of sovereigns, who are obliged to sacrifice their dearest friends to the imperious demands of state necessity.

The secession, or rather dismissal, of Harley from office was immediately followed by the resignation of St. John. It may be supposed that so strong an evidence of identity of interest affords sufficient proof that the latter was privy to all the intrigues which had caused the division; but the inference is not necessary.

Without considering the friendship which St. John entertained for Harley, and his admiration of his talents—perhaps his hopes of advancement from attaching himself to his fortunes; there were sufficient motives of a mere party nature to justify the

course which he then pursued. By the dismissal of Harley, the Tory party in the cabinet became extinct. Had St. John remained, he must have abandoned his politics as a Tory, and have followed the chiefs of the council over to the ranks of the Whigs: but he had chosen his party, and he resolved to abide by his choice, preferring rather to forfeit his place than his political consistency.

CHAPTER V.

Harley's Intrigues at Court.—Unpopularity of the Whigs.—Attempts against the Duke of Marlborough.—The Queen's Dislike to her Ministers.—St. John's Conduct in Opposition.—Retires from the House of Commons.—Dissolution of the Godolphin Administration.

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THE violence which the cabinet had done to the inclinations of the queen, in insisting upon the retirement of her favourite minister, was not calculated to increase her confidence in them. This measure seems to have broken the tie which still bound her to Marlborough, and inclined her to listen to all the tales which those around her were eager to whisper to his disadvantage. Dr. Sacheverell's trial, which occurred at this time, gave great assistance to their schemes, by rendering the Tories suddenly the popular party. With little ability, learning, or virtue, this violent man was still a powerful instrument in the hands of those who espoused his cause that they might sanctify their own. The people beheld the persecution of a churchman who had little claim upon their esteem, and they instantly connected it with danger to a church which had and merited their love. Their suspicions were excited, their

passions were aroused, and the affair was dexterously improved to throw odium upon the Whigs. The managers of the commons, in conducting his impeachment, were necessarily obliged to assert the principles of the revolution: these expressions were severely canvassed in the palace, and were adduced in confirmation of the accusation of dangerous tenets which had been before attributed to the new allies of the ministry.

The nocturnal conversations which had continued while Harley was in office, were not now intermitted. So infatuated was the queen, that she deemed no sacrifice too great to enjoy the society of her favourites. She had purchased a small house at Windsor, and endured the inconvenience which a residence there entailed upon her, only because the park attached to it afforded Mrs. Masham private opportunities of introducing her friends. Another instance of her partiality, and the fear she had of discovery, was more discreditable to her sensibility as a woman. Her husband, the Prince of Denmark, had lately died; and Anne, to the surprise of her attendants, chose his closet as her retiring room. The Duchess of Marlborough expressed her astonishment that she should have chosen a spot so likely to suggest to her the most dreary reflections. Anne was startled, and seems to have been for the first time struck with the strangeness of her conduct. She changed her room; but the duchess asserts, that what originally determined her choice was, that a

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staircase communicated with it from Mrs. Masham's rooms, and afforded facilities for her private interviews with Harley and his friends.*

Among the most assiduous of the attendants at the palace were a number of the high-church clergy, who felt themselves to be identified with the cause of Dr. Sacheverell; and spared no pains to make his persecutors odious to the queen. They poured into her ear the soft doctrines of non-resistance and unrestrained prerogative; and drew between their own unlimited loyalty and the jealous reservations of their opponents a contrast which could not fail to be convincing to a princess who was not insensible to flattery, nor careless of her prerogative. Harley conceived these to be no contemptible allies, and he secured their good offices. His ancient flirtation with the dissenters had rendered him an object of some suspicion to the high-church party; but he was not sparing of protestations where an object was to be gained, and his present exclusion by the Whigs appeared a sufficient pledge for his sincerity. The queen had been before taught by her spiritual advisers, that the church was in danger; that the same hand which was raised against Dr. Sacheverell would fall with sacrilegious violence upon all the religious institutions of the country:—it was now added, that none but Harley could arrest the blow; that it was upon him that the eyes of the whole nation were

* Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough.

turned; that he alone could preserve the church and save the country.

With these sentiments, expressed by all who enjoyed her favour and abused her confidence, Anne doubtless concurred; but she could yet not divest herself of admiration for the great talents of Marlborough, or forget the splendid services he had performed: she could not but remember the unreserved confidence she had once reposed in him, and the assistance he had afforded her at a time when she most needed it. To destroy this feeling was a necessary preliminary to the success of the designs of her new advisers. Her vanity was piqued by constantly dwelling upon his importance and power. He was represented as directing at his will every measure of the state; as all-influential with the allies, who, as his enemies told her, considered the regal power effectually vested in him, and regarded his sovereign as a mere cipher, having no other office than to execute his decrees. While they hurt her vanity by such representations of the estimation in which she was held abroad, they aroused her jealousy by insinuating that he who so absolutely exercised the authority of a king could hardly want power to assume the title; and they applauded the resolution which had at last broken the bondage in which the Marlboroughs had so long held her. Their success was so great, that Mrs. Masham at last was able to promise Harley, the duke should receive so many mortifications, that it should be impossible for

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him to continue in the service;—a promise which by some means became known to the object of its threat, and formed the subject of a strong remonstrance which he addressed to his mistress.

Mrs. Masham had the necessity of self-preservation to plead for pushing her hostility to the Marlboroughs to the extent of driving them from the presence of their sovereign; and Anne had received an insult which justified her in lending herself to her favourite's views. When the duchess found that her rival was too firmly established in her mistress's favour to be shaken by her influence, she subjected her to whatever insult it was in her power to inflict; and these were more adapted to enrage the mistress than to injure the servant. One of her measures, whether, as she declares, it was only a threat, or whether, as Harley asserts,* and as his contemporaries believed, it was a defeated attempt, must have aroused the indignation of the queen, and determined her favourite to keep no longer any terms with her opponents. That the duchess should seriously advise, and ministers approve, an address of the house of commons for the removal of a bedchamber-woman, proves the desperate condition of the proposers and the power of the obnoxious servant. We are told that ministers were only restrained from moving, and doubtless carrying, such an address by the indignant remonstrances of Anne herself. It is not

* Harley's tract of "Faults on Both Sides," Somers' Tracts.

surprising that this impolitic attempt should have detached the last tie which held them to office.

So complete was the influence the intriguers had now gained, that Anne had joined in systematic opposition to her own ministry; and, if the assertion of the Duchess of Marlborough deserves credit, afterwards, when they had succeeded in their object, Harley and his friends often boasted in their cups, that while the ministers were asleep, they were at court, assisting the queen in devising schemes to perplex and oppose what her responsible advisers had done during the day.

But the history of the decline of this ministry is important to our narrative only as it influenced the fortunes of St. John. In the intrigues which were carried on after his secession from office, he certainly bore no part. By the uncompromising adherence to the principles upon which he started, he gained the confidence of his friends and the esteem of his opponents. His conduct in parliament during the period which intervened between his retirement and the dissolution was marked by a moderation which astonished his late colleagues, who expected to find him furious and foremost in opposition. The temper he preserved was as politic as it was commendable. His talents challenged admiration; his present moderation commanded respect, and induced many who had disliked him in office to consider him now as a man who postponed his private resentments to his country's good. Probably St. John obtained credit

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for a strength of patriotism which he did not possess; for we find in his works frequent boasting allusions to the services he had done his party, and the sacrifices he had made in their behalf. A devotion to a faction is seldom compatible with a refined sense of patriotism; and we have his own ingenuous confession, that each party felt that it was a struggle of factions for ascendency, and that the prize of victory was power.

But, whatever were the motives that influenced his political conduct, his public acts, both in retaining and relinquishing office, were much less exposed to censure than his private life. That eager pursuit of pleasure which had stained his early youth, was the more serious reproach of his manhood. No affairs of state could be sufficiently important in his eyes to postpone a purposed gratification; no call of prudence, not even ambition itself, could moderate the licentiousness of his dissipation. These disgraceful excesses, which have been fairly urged in refutation of the principles he avowed, derived additional infamy from the exalted station in which they were enacted. But, while they load the memory of his private character with reproach, they contribute to vindicate his public conduct from any participation in the tortuous intrigues of his friend. The queen was attached, by education and conviction, to the principles of the church; and, although her zeal was somewhat indiscreet, her sincerity was undoubted. Her practice usually accorded with her professions;

and the glaring immoralities of St. John, faithfully detailed to her as they were by the suspicious jealousy of Harley, inspired her with a disgust for his private character, which his political conduct might qualify, but could not destroy.* This was too well known to hold out to him any inducements to a frequent attendance at her court, and affords an additional argument for pronouncing him guiltless of bearing part in the scene of duplicity which was played off against Marlborough and Godolphin. The honour of the statesman is of more importance to the community than the virtue of the man; and, perhaps, the object of our criticism would not be unwilling to compound for our approbation of the secretary by the condemnation of Mr. St. John.

Whether it was that adversity enforced a lesson which success had never been able to inculcate,—or whether, which is more likely, he felt the necessity of preparing himself for an arduous struggle, and regretted the time he had already lost,—certain it is, that from the time he left office, his behaviour underwent an entire change—a change which was, indeed, but temporary in its duration, but which was not the less complete in its nature and lasting in its effects. It is probable that the situation which he had held, and the manner in which he had fallen from it, had taught him that there were many branches of knowledge necessary for an efficient minister of state which his devotion to pleasure had

* Stuart Papers, Macph. vol. ii. p. 533.

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hitherto left him no leisure to acquire; that the attainment of every auxiliary was necessary to the acquisition of the supremacy for which he panted, and to throw off the dependency which in his heart he abhorred. No sooner was the parliament dissolved, than St. John withdrew from the representation of the borough for which he had hitherto sat: and while Harley was pursuing his well-concocted schemes, he retired into the country, and employed himself in the diligent prosecution of a course of study. He was before inferior to few of his competitors in the extent and multiplicity of his acquirements; his prominent superiority over them is to be dated from this time, when that innate love of knowledge, which, he says, he always felt, acquired sufficient power, by coalescing with his ambition, to withdraw him for a season from the field of controversy and the scenes of pleasure. For two years he devoted himself to retirement and study; and he ever afterwards mentioned these two years as the most pleasant and profitable period of his life. The evidences of deep reading which are scattered throughout his works, sufficiently indicate his application, and show that his learning was not superficial. Generally, when he quotes the sentiment of an author, he adopts his words; and the frequent occurrence of passages from the ancients has subjected his style to the charge of pedantry. But the pedantry of St. John, if pedantry it be, is not that laborious striving for display which marks a shallow mind. He wrote many of his

works, in which these quotations most frequently occur, in places where he had not books to consult; and we are assured that in all cases he was indebted for his illustrations solely to his memory. That he should have preserved the language of his author, shows, under such circumstances, rather the strength of his retention, than the labour or affectation which the charge of pedantry implies. This store of learning, which furnished him with brilliant ideas in debate and happy illustrations in composition, he chiefly gathered, and entirely methodized, in the two years during which he was lost to the political world.

But events soon occurred to draw him from his retirement, and to place him again in the situation for which he was so eminently qualified. The parliament from which he had been excluded consisted almost entirely of Whigs, whose complete ascendency had been secured by the practice, at this time general, of deciding upon election petitions according to the sentiments of the candidates. Secure in their majority, they ventured upon measures which occasioned their ruin. It was this parliament which undertook the prosecution of Sacheverell, to which we before had occasion to allude when speaking of the intrigues of the court. To adopt the quaint expression of Bishop Burnet, "The Whigs took it in their heads to roast a parson, and they did roast him; but their zeal tempted them to make the fire so high that they scorched themselves." This fire, which threatened destruction to those who had

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kindled it, was, however, fed with fuel from other quarters. The ministers often decided upon important subjects without inquiring the queen's sentiments, and not unfrequently in opposition to her known wishes. If Anne had the irresolution and timidity, she had also some share of the obstinacy, of the Stuarts; and an independent spirit, which taught her to abhor the idea of being thought a mere instrument in the hands of her counsellors, made her more vulnerable to the secret attacks of her court, when they assailed her vanity, and described her being taken to hear the progress of Sacheverell's trial as being led to school to imbibe the rudiments of Whig politics. Another circumstance happened, which showed how diminished was the influence of her old counsellor, and discovered to the world that the star of Marlborough had passed its zenith. By the death of Lord Essex, a colonelcy was at the disposal of the crown. This Mrs. Masham requested for her brother,—the same whom we have seen the Duchess of Marlborough describe as "Honest Jack Hill, the ragged boy she clothed and sent to school." The duke declared that Hill was "good for nothing;" and wrote an urgent letter to the queen, to prevail upon her to withdraw her nomination. Anne was fixed in her purpose, which the personal entreaties of Marlborough could not shake: the only answer he obtained was one of her reiterated replies, that he had better advise with his friends.

This mortification discovered that the power of

the Whigs was rotten at its base; but the cautious policy of Harley led him rather to retard than precipitate their fall. That he had the power to dismiss them from office at any moment, he was well assured: to avoid doing any violence to public opinion by the too open exercise of that power, was now his aim. But although his schemes were developed cautiously and gradually, they were not allowed to slumber. Three weeks after the defeat of the Whigs in the case of Sacheverell—for a defeat it essentially was*—without communicating the matter to any of her ministers, the queen took the chamberlain's staff from the Marquis of Kent, and gave it to the Duke of Shrewsbury, who had voted for the acquittal of that clergyman. This nobleman had belonged to the Whig party during the last reign, but had since then resided several years abroad, where he had married an Italian lady, whose religion was considered equivocal, since she had been induced to declare herself a protestant by the same romantic passion which had led her uninvited to follow the duke from her home and country. A half-popish wife was

* The censure passed upon him was ridiculously slight for an offence which was deemed worthy of such particular notice, and such unusual proceedings against him. He was suspended from preaching for three years: and the proposition, that during that time he should be incapable of preferment, was lost by a majority of one; the numbers being fifty-nine to sixty. That he, his party, and the people, considered his sentence as a triumph, the bonfires and illuminations over the whole kingdom, and his well-known procession into Wales, sufficiently testify.

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at that time considered no slight argument against the honesty of her husband; and at his return the duke appears to have been received with coldness and suspicion by his old friends. Notwithstanding this, he supported the administration until his votes upon Sacheverell's trial declared him to be a deserter from their ranks. His change of principles was attributed to a secret management between him and Harley with Mrs. Masham; and the manner in which he had been thrust into office, by the dismissal of an officer of state without the advice of the council, although that officer was compensated for his loss by a dukedom, gave great alarm, for it was immediately concluded that this was only the prelude to an entire change of ministry.

But those who ruled the councils of Anne were not yet prepared for so bold a measure. While she was engaged in an act so opposed to them, she pretended a deference to their wishes. She wrote a letter to Godolphin, acquainting him with what she had done, and expressing a hope that he would approve of this and all her actions.* This produced a strong remonstrance from the high treasurer, which served only to show how little the queen felt the anxiety for the approbation of her ministry which she expressed. About two months were suffered to elapse before another blow was directed against them; but this had been retarded only that it might be more decisive.

* Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough.

The Earl of Sunderland, whose introduction into the cabinet had been the most important victory of the Whigs, was now removed; and Lord Dartmouth was appointed to his post. This measure was looked upon as deciding the fate of the ministry, and the people were loud in their applause. But the Whigs still had a majority in the commons, and Anne still hesitated to declare her purpose.

The near relationship of Sunderland to Marlborough suggested the idea that his removal was resolved upon as a personal indignity to the duke. The allies, who confided in him as the great support of the war, ventured to remonstrate with the queen upon her determination. The monied interest, who beheld in him the best pledge of successes which could alone sustain the deeply mortgaged credit of the country, complained; and the governor of the Bank sought an interview with her majesty, to represent to her the injuries which the measures she was pursuing were likely to inflict upon the commerce of her kingdom. The queen was frightened at the storm she had raised; she hesitated and temporized. She declared that she had no intention of making any farther changes; and she instructed her ambassadors at the courts of her allies to make declarations to the same effect.

It is probable that these declarations were in some measure confided in; otherwise it is hardly possible to account for the tenacity with which the ministers clung to office. Even after the dismissal

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of Sunderland must have convinced them that they had lost the confidence of their mistress, and that they were responsible for her conduct without having the power to influence it, they could not resolve to retire. They looked upon Marlborough as sufficient in himself to support any ministry; and, fearful lest the removal of his relation, added to the other mortifications which he had lately experienced, might induce him to abandon them, they wrote him an earnest request that he would not, under any circumstances, resign his command.

Perhaps it would be too much to attribute duplicity to the queen or her advisers at this time. It is by no means clear that either contemplated the entire removal of the old administration. Harley's object was to gain the place, or at least the power, which Godolphin then held; and, provided that object were obtained, he was not very scrupulous as to the political creed of his coadjutors. He is said to have observed, that the Tories had been so little in office lately, and were therefore so little acquainted with the details of business, that it was absolutely necessary to bring over a few practical Whigs to direct the subordinate offices of the administration.

With this view, while steadily pursuing his object of weakening their power by removing them one by one, he was engaged in negotiations with those who remained. He held out the preservation of the present house of commons, in which they had a majority, as the reward of their compliance; while

he threatened them with a dissolution, which would have left them in a minority, as the consequence of their refusal. But here he met with an unconquerable obstacle in the pretensions of his own party. They thought their hour of triumph was come, and they were unwilling to share any portion of their prosperity with their old foes. They refused to coalesce upon any terms with the Whigs; and even Harley's influence was not strong enough to neutralize the dislike with which Anne had always regarded that party.

But had the Tories been more ready to strengthen themselves with the more practised talents of their opponents, the scheme would have had small chance of success. In vain did Harley assure the Whigs that* "a Whig game was intended at bottom:" the treacherous part he had already played, had given them sufficient reason to distrust any fact which depended only on his assertion; and they chose rather to retire from power, than to acknowledge as their chief one who had already betrayed them.

Upon the failure of his negotiations, it was resolved to effect the entire removal of the ministry. The mask was suddenly dropped;† Godolphin was

* Coxe's Life of Walpole.

† Swift at this time writes thus:—"I hear the report confirmed of removals. My Lord President Somers, the Duke of Devonshire, lord steward, and Mr. Boyle, secretary of state, are all turned out to-day. I never remember such bold steps taken by a court: I am almost shocked at it, though I did not care if they

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dismissed from his office, and the treasury was put in commission.* Thus fell the Godolphin administration, which, composed of the most talented men in the nation, had extended their country's power abroad, and purified her institutions at home.

Bigoted to no party, the leaders of this ministry had veered round the political compass as they found the one party or the other more inclined to advance or oppose their principal measures. Their personal abilities require no comment. If the talents of Marlborough for the council are eclipsed by his achievements in the field, posterity must allow, that the mind which could acquire and hold almost absolute power in England—which could persuade successive parliaments to vote supplies, unprecedented in their amount, for a war often doubtful in its necessity, and faint in its promises of advantage—and which could form and keep together an alliance of independent princes, with separate objects, and sometimes jarring interests—needed not the laurels

were all hanged. We shall have a strange winter here, between the struggles of a cunning, provoked, discarded party, and the triumphs of one in power."—*Journal to Stella*, Sept. 20, 1710.

* Godolphin was upon this occasion treated with great indignity. The command to break his staff was delivered by an ordinary livery servant. The treatment he received might well justify the violent expressions which he used, as he brake the staff of office and threw it into the fire: but these, when carefully reported to the queen, were not calculated to recall her favour.

gathered at Blenheim and Ramilies to designate it as of no ordinary power or calibre.

Of the talents of his faithful coadjutor, Godolphin, we have an unquestionable testimonial in the confidence which was reposed in him by the monied interest of the country; a class of persons that the national debt, which had already acquired some bulk, had lately raised into much greater importance than they had before enjoyed. So great was their confidence in this minister's talents as a financier, that the majority of them made the public credit personal to him, and, scrupling to advance money upon the credit of the nation, offered it upon his single word.*

It falls not within the province of the biographer of Bolingbroke to criticise with minuteness the conduct of this administration; but no one who can estimate the mutual advantages which have accrued to the two kingdoms from the union of England and Scotland, can look back upon that measure without a sentiment of admiration for the men who, against the formidable obstacles of national prejudice and party opposition, brought their great design to a successful issue.

That their conduct upon all occasions will not warrant the high eulogium which a reference to this single part of it would tempt posterity to pass upon them, must be admitted. And perhaps we must also

* Coxe's Walpole.

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agree with St. John, that, during the latter part of their existence, they forfeited much of the claim they had established upon the gratitude of their country. While he continued with them, his activity was second to none; and he is fully entitled to share the praise of every beneficial measure which was carried while he held office. While labouring with them, he was zealous in the service of his country; but it would be folly to ascribe any higher motive for his desertion than adherence to his party and a view to his own interest. Had he remained, since his authority was but secondary, he must have concurred in the measures which were afterwards taken, and which he then forcibly opposed and afterwards condemned. The admirer of Bolingbroke may therefore be glad to find, that if he acted from party spirit, he might defend his conduct upon a nobler principle,—that the claims of his party were in unison with the dictates of his conscience.

Of those errors of the Godolphin administration which succeeded the secession of St. John, some were mere instances of bad policy, others were fatal mistakes. Some, like the prosecution of Sacheverell, were injurious only to themselves; but there were others which fell with a blighting influence upon the interests of their country. Among these, none was so indefensible in its motive or ruinous in its consequences as the determination which was taken to carry on the war, when such terms were offered as

deprived the allies of all just pretence for the bloodshed and losses which ensued.

The immense supplies which had been granted, to an amount then unprecedented in our history; the popularity of the war, the excellence of our armies, and the talents of our generals,—had obtained for the allies successes which in every seat of this extended war were now become as decisive as they were glorious. In Italy, the fortune of Prince Eugene had proved predominant; and the Duke of Orleans, his opponent, was driven from before the walls of Turin, and compelled to evacuate all his conquests. In Spain, the siege of Barcelona, so gloriously raised, and a passage to Madrid laid open, were decisive of the fortune of the campaign; while in Flanders, the disastrous defeats of the Elector of Bavaria and Marshal Villeroi had shaken the firmness of Louis, and compelled him to sue in earnest for a peace. He offered all that the allies had in the first instance contemplated, or could now justly demand. He would have yielded all the Italian provinces of Spain to the house of Austria, — the very portion of that kingdom which their narrow policy had originally prompted them to desire. He offered full satisfaction to England and to Holland for the insults the one, and the injuries the other, had received; and he proposed an equitable adjustment of the claims of the other allies.

It is difficult to conceive any valid argument which ministers could advance for continuing to shed the

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blood of the people, and to mortgage the resources of the country, in the prosecution of a war which now had as its only pretence the vague and ambiguous object of humbling the power of France. They did not, or would not see, that in humbling the power of France they were inflicting a deadly wound upon their own. The gashes which France received were deep, but they were open: they looked terrific at the moment of the blow, and paralyzed her efforts. But their effect was temporary; the faintness passed away, and her vigour returned. Not so with her opponent: in dealing the blow she had exceeded her strength, and the exertion produced an inward strain which is still felt, now that the wounds of her enemy are healed and forgotten.

The censure of unnecessarily continuing a destructive war must fall chiefly upon Marlborough, who conducted the negotiations; but it must be in some degree shared by the Tories, who, in their anxiety to remove their most powerful enemy from the court, obtained his appointment to an office which he, from his private interest and inveterate prejudice, was of all men the least adapted to discharge. In the conduct of war, the British lion was as wary in his preparations as he was bold and crushing in his spring: but in peace he saw only the entire destruction of his already waning influence—he beheld only the loss of all means of maintaining his profuse expenditure; and perhaps he fancied that he saw his country deprived of the advantages she had a right to expect

from her success. Accordingly, we find him insisting upon preliminaries which manifested an intention of destroying all hopes of peace, and treating the French ambassadors with an insolence which was as disgraceful to himself as it was injurious to his country.

Marlborough's insatiate greediness of money was the constant theme of his enemies; and he gave them too many occasions to renew the charge. An anecdote is related of the Earl of Peterborough, highly illustrative of the public feeling with regard to the conduct of Marlborough in pecuniary matters. This facetious nobleman was once taken by the mob for the duke; and being about to be roughly treated by these admirers of summary justice, he addressed them in these words: "Gentlemen, I can convince you by two reasons that I am not the duke. In the first place, I have only five guineas in my pocket; and in the second, they are heartily at your service." So, throwing his purse among them, he pursued his way amid their loud acclamations.* It must be remembered, however, that the earl was noted for his personal enmity to Marlborough.

The opinion of his avarice must have been strong among his contemporaries, before the French minister would have dared to offer him a direct bribe to induce him to grant more favourable terms. His admirers confess his weakness by celebrating his resistance of the temptation; but the people declared, that no bribe the French king could offer

* Orford's Noble Authors, Parke's edit.

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could equal the sums which he annually derived from the war. They were urgent for peace, and vehemently exclaimed against a contest which they declared was prosecuted only to gratify the ambition and avarice of a single man.

The imperious conduct of the allies, governed as they were by the will of Marlborough, produced the consequences which were anticipated. The French king was destitute of resources, and his people were reduced to extreme distress; yet no sooner did they learn that their monarch, who had given law to Europe, was required to stoop to concessions which were humiliating to himself and inglorious to France, than they answered his appeal with an enthusiasm which the most brilliant success could not have enhanced. The people flocked in thousands to his standard; their very distresses contributing to increase their loyalty.

Louis had indeed little to offer. His treasury was destitute of money, and his magazines were but slenderly supplied with corn, but what little there was in the country, was there; and the peasantry found in his service a refuge from the absolute starvation which menaced them at home. This account of the state of his kingdom serves, more than any argument drawn from its external relations, to show that Louis was at this time sincere in his desire for a permanent peace: and it serves also to account for the strenuous efforts which enabled France, when she was considered to be prostrate at the feet of the

allies, suddenly to resume the struggle, to wrest from them the advantages they had gained, and finally to oblige them to conclude a peace upon terms incomparably less advantageous than those which they now refused.

The abrupt termination of these negotiations was little adapted to pour oil upon those waves of political agitation which the prosecution of Sacheverell had called into being at home. The ministry had lost the favour of the people; and Anne knew that the mob which stopped her carriage upon her passage to the house, and saluted her with "God bless your majesty! we hope you are for Dr. Sacheverell and the church," spoke the sentiments of the majority of her subjects. When she found her own private predilections favoured, not only by her secret counsellors, but also by the public voice, it is not surprising that she discarded a party which she had always disliked.

CHAPTER VI.

Formation of the New Administration.—Its Difficulties.—Dissolution of Parliament.—St. John returned for Berks.—'The Examiner' established.—St. John's Letter.—Answered by Earl Cowper.

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THE continuance of the war had chiefly effected the unpopularity of the old administration; the promise of peace was the cause of the popular rejoicing which welcomed the new. During the latter period of the existence of the Godolphin government, Harley had been engaged in negotiations with France; and St. John had occasionally ventured from his literary retirement to give effect to his proposals. This design, which Harley was compelled to avow in order to preserve his popularity, was of great injury to him in his secret intrigues with the Whigs, by whose assistance he hoped to keep in check St. John and Harcourt, whom he already looked upon with jealousy.

The Whigs however were faithful to Marlborough and war; and Harley was obliged to form his ministry entirely from the Tories. In apportioning the offices, he attempted to confine St. John to that which he had before held; a design which, consi-

dering the devotedness with which the latter had adhered to him when dismissed, is creditable rather to his foresight than his gratitude. He had the same views with regard to Harcourt, who was to be restored to his place of attorney-general, while St. John was to be reinstated in his office of secretary at war.*

But both St. John and Harcourt knew the value of their assistance too well to accept offices which they felt to be inferior to their merits. They directly refused to join the new ministry upon such terms; and as their party seconded them in their opposition, Harley was obliged to give way: St. John was appointed secretary of state, and the seals were at length given to Harcourt. Harley himself was appointed one of the commissioners of the treasury, and chancellor and under-treasurer of the exchequer. Nominally, therefore, there was no premier. It was only his known influence over the queen, and the deference which was paid him by his party, which pointed Harley out as the head of the administration.

The administration now stood thus:—Lord Dartmouth and St. John, secretaries of state, instead of Lord Sunderland and Mr. Boyle. The office of Lord Godolphin, who was removed from the treasury, put into commission: Earl Pawlet, first commissioner; Harley, Mansel, Paget, and Benson, the others. Mr. Harley, chancellor of the exchequer;

* Stuart Papers.

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an office which Godolphin had also held. The Earl of Rochester, president of the council, instead of Lord Somers. Sir Simon Harcourt, attorney-general, instead of Sir James Montagu; and the Duke of Shrewsbury, lord chamberlain, instead of the Marquis of Kent. Soon afterwards, Sir S. Harcourt was made lord chancellor, with the title of Baron Harcourt, instead of Lord Cowper, who, notwithstanding several efforts to retain him, insisted upon resigning. Marlborough was continued in the command of the army; and although several of the Whig lords followed the example of the Earls of Orford and Wharton, and threw up their commissions, the duke appears to have reconciled himself to his altered fortunes.

We have an account of the understanding which took place between him and the new ministry in the words of St. John. In a letter to his confidential agent, Mr. Drummond, he says: "He" (the duke) "has been told by the Duke of Shrewsbury, by Mr. Harley, and by your humble servant, that since the queen agrees to his commanding the army, it is our duty, and in the highest degree our interest, to support him, if possible, better than he ever yet was; and that he may depend upon this. He has seen in other instances that we are able to see and to pursue that which was right; why should he think us capable of judging upon this occasion so wrong? He was told at first that he had nothing to reproach us with; that his wife, my Lord Godolphin, and himself had thrown the queen's favour

away; and that he ought not to be angry if other people had taken it up. He was told that his true interest consisted in getting rid of his wife, who was grown to be irreconcileable with the queen, as soon as he could, and with the best grace which he could: instead of this, he teased the queen, and made the utmost effort to keep this woman in her places: he never brought the key* till he had but three days given him to do it in, and till he found that a longer delay was not to be hoped for from the queen's resolution; however, he now pretends to make a merit of this resignation. He has been told that he must draw a line between all that is past and all that is to come, and that he must begin entirely upon a new foot; that if he looked back to make complaints, he would have more retorted upon him than it was possible to answer; that if he would make his former conduct the rule of his future behaviour, he would render his interests incompatible with those of the queen. What is the effect of all this plain dealing? He submits, he yields, he promises to comply.

"We shall do what we can to support him in the command of the army, without betraying our mistress; and, unless he is infatuated, he will help us in this design; for you must know, that the moment he leaves the service and loses the protection of the court, such scenes will open as no victories will varnish over."

* The symbol of her office as keeper of the privy purse.

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The first effort of the new ministry was to secure themselves in the power they had gained. But this was a task of no small difficulty. The house of lords was against them; in the commons their opponents had a great majority, and the monied interest threatened to embarrass all their measures, by withdrawing the credit they had extended to Godolphin. The Whigs still flattered themselves that there were men in the ministry who would never consent to what they considered the extreme measure of a dissolution; and while the commons continued with them, they dreaded but little any accession of strength to their opponents in any other quarter. The pecuniary embarrassments of the ministry at starting were great, and even critical; so that their best friends doubted whether they could sustain themselves against them.* But Harley contrived to divide the City interest, and by means of those arts of petty diplomacy in which he was so skilled, obtained a seasonable supply.†

Having thus obtained resources, without which no government could be carried on, his next point was

* Astle Papers.

† It was upon this occasion that he published the tract so celebrated at that time, called "An Essay upon Public Credit," which, although written under the direction of Harley, and generally attributed to him, is probably the production of the celebrated Daniel De Foe. The monied interest, to whom this was addressed, was a party little liable to be influenced by mere argument; and it required some strong measures, among which was that South Sea scheme which afterwards occasioned such extensive losses, to convince them that it was their interest to give him their support.

to neutralize an opposition which no ministry will be ever able to resist. Notwithstanding the confident predictions of the Whigs, that the present parliament would be continued, it was suddenly dissolved; and with it vanished their power and hopes of office during this reign.

It was now that the sudden change in the popular mind influenced the public conduct of the country. While the votes of the commons were for war, the voice of the people was rather loud than influential. The general election restored to them their importance. Their indignation against the Whigs, who were considered as identified with the war, was at this time seasonably augmented by some reverses which Marlborough sustained. The cry against them became louder and more violent, until at last the Whig candidates in many places dared not appear upon the hustings, and their friends were intimidated from voting in their favour. It is said that this decided triumph of the Tories was not in all respects agreeable to the new managers; but that, having gained their chief aim by removing the late lord treasurer and his friends, they rather designed to hold the balance between the parties. They wished only such a majority of the high-church as might countenance their new schemes, and were desirous of an opposition sufficiently powerful to overawe their friends, and prevent their caballing among themselves, or making any of their favourite motions against toleration. But if this was the intention of

* Swift's Journal to Stella.

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the minister, the result of the elections showed that he had either failed in his computations or his endeavours. Many causes came in aid of the unpopularity of the Whigs to exclude them from the new parliament. They had imagined there was no design on foot for a dissolution, and had rested in supine indifference, while their opponents were actively employed in canvassing the very places for which they sat. The clergy also, who considered themselves identified with Sacheverell and attacked through him, kept up the outcry against his prosecutors, and the churches rang with violent invectives against the Whigs. The historian accuses the inferior clergy of violating, upon this occasion, all the common duties of gratitude, and of strenuously opposing their patrons and benefactors.* That much bitterness of feeling prevailed, and much violence existed, is doubtless true: but not all the excesses of the people in conducting the elections could disgrace them, so much as the conduct of the commons, in determining the appeals, did their representatives. In every preceding meeting of a new parliament, we have had occasion to notice the unblushing partiality which was exercised upon deciding these questions: and this is not the last instance of it. The fall of Sir R. Walpole, long afterwards, was determined by the loss of his usual majority upon an election petition.†

* Tindal.

† The excellent method of trying election cases which at present prevails originated

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Among the competitors St. John had come off with great success: he was not only elected for his old borough of Wootton Bassett, but also for the county of Berks, for which he elected to sit.

One of the most efficient measures which the Tories had taken to advance their popularity, was to gain the support of all the men of talent and controversial abilities whom their patronage could allure. About this period the power of the press had become greater than had ever before been known in this country. Occasional circumstances had indeed frequently given vast influence to particular productions; and the tracts of Marprelate, and other fictitious champions, exercised a power over the politics of their day which has deserved the notice of history. But it is from about this period that we are to date the influence which periodical political publications have since exercised over the public mind. Before this time, such attempts were isolated and occasional; henceforward they became uniform and systematic. Regular periodical papers were established; and those who from station and talent ranked first in the nation, contributed to sustain the reputation of the organ of their party. Under the

with Mr. Grenville, who deserves all the credit of abrogating the partial and unconstitutional mode of trial which was formerly used. The act, which goes by his name, (the 10 Geo. III. c. 16,) has required others to amend and perpetuate it; but it contained all the fundamental provisions upon this point which experience has since approved.

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transparent disguise of an assumed name, they could in its pages enforce their principles with an energy which would have been judged indecorous in the houses of the legislature; and the custom of the time allowed a coarseness and personality in their articles, that lent a raciness to their style calculated to attract the attention and gratify the coarser taste of the people.

The hero of these contests was Swift, who is too well known, both as a poet and a politician, to require any notice at our hands. His talents had been seen and appreciated by Harley, who introduced him to St. John;* and he was always afterwards the steady supporter and constant companion of these ministers. The genius of Prior and the cutting satire of Atterbury† were exercised in the same

* Swift was introduced to Harley at this critical period by a commission, with which he had been intrusted by the primate of Ireland. His object was to solicit the queen for a remission of the first fruits and twentieth parts to the Irish clergy. His Tale of a Tub, published six years before, had given him notoriety; and Harley was not slow to see the value of such an ally. Swift was not more consistent than most of his coadjutors. Some account of his conversion to Toryism will be found in his "Memoirs relating to the Change in the Queen's Ministry."

† Dr. Atterbury, afterwards bishop of Rochester, was described in the house of convocation as "Vir in nullo literarum genere hospes, in plerisque artibus et studiis diu et feliciter exercitatus, in maximè perfectis literarum disciplinis perfectissimus." It were well for the fame of Atterbury if an equally merited eulogium could be passed upon his private character and sentiments. But an irregular mode of liv-

cause ; and, directed by the master-mind of St. John, they formed the chief leaders of a literary band, who shot their light shafts against the Whigs, and, scattered around the cabinet, defended every pass against an enemy which could number among their chiefs a Walpole, an Addison, and a Steele.

The controversial talents of all these eminent men were concentrated in the production of a weekly paper, called the Examiner. In this the views of the new ministry were gradually developed, their interests were espoused, and their measures defended. But the paper which engrossed the attention of the public, and superseded for the moment every other topic of conversation, was a communication of St. John, which has ever since been well known by the title of "Mr. St. John's Letter to the Examiner." In this letter he forcibly paints the error of the late ministry in neglecting the proper moment to obtain an honourable peace. He writes, "To restore the Spanish monarchy to the house of Austria, who by their own supineness and the perfidy of the French had lost it, and to regain a barrier for Holland, which lay naked and open to the insults of France, were the wise and generous motives which engaged England in the present war.

ing and a loose style of thinking seem to have been the prevailing features in the character of the men who composed St. John's set; with the exception perhaps of Swift, who was as offensive in his language as his companions were in their acts and sentiments.

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We engaged as confederates, but we were made to proceed as principals—principals in expense of blood and treasure, whilst hardly a second place in respect and dignity is allowed to us.

"In the year 1706, the last of these two motives was effectually answered by the reduction of the Netherlands, or might have been so by the concessions which it is notorious that the enemy offered. But the first motive remained still in its full force; and we were told, that though the barrier of Holland was secured, the trade of Britain and the balance of power in Europe would still be precarious. Spain, therefore was to be conquered before we laid down our arms; and we were made to expect that the whole attention of our ministers would be applied to that part of the war. Like men of resigned understandings, we acquiesced, and flattered ourselves that since Holland had been secured in the first place, Britain would be taken care of in the second. But, alas! these expectations, like many others, have failed us." He contends that the brilliant successes and decisive victories which had been since obtained, tended in no respect to advance the remaining ostensive object of the war. "Just enough has been done," he says, "to serve as a pretence for estimates and demands of supplies. Towns have been taken, and battles have been won; the mob has huzzaed round bonfires; the Stentor of the Chapel has strained his throat in the gallery, and the Stentor of Sarum" (the celebrated Dr. Burnet,

bishop of Salisbury, one of St. John's most able opponents), "has deafened his audience from the pulpit. In the mean while, the French king has withdrawn his troops from Spain, and has put it out of his power to restore the monarchy to us, was he reduced low enough really to desire to do it. The Duke of Anjou has had leisure enough to take off those whom he suspected, to confirm his friends, to regulate his revenues, to increase and form his troops, and, above all, to rouse that spirit in the Spanish nation which a succession of lazy and indolent princes had lulled asleep." A.D. 1710.

He proceeds to argue, that if the war continues much longer, the French king will find a powerful ally in the sovereign who had hitherto depended for existence only upon succours from France: that the Dutch, although they were eager to continue a war in which all the resources of England were drained, in order to increase and strengthen their territory, yet avoided the payment of their stipulated contingency. The emperor, (he says,) having already obtained the advantages which he wished, would easily abandon his relative, and Britain might expect to remain exhausted of men and money—to see her trade divided amongst her neighbours, her revenues anticipated even to future generations, and to have this only glory left her—that she had proved a farm to the bank, a province to Holland, and a jest to the whole world. He argues, from a review of these circumstances, that the King of France must,

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from the errors of the ministry which directed the affairs of the kingdom to this crisis, find himself in a situation to demand higher terms; and he proceeds to assign farther reasons for his pretensions, from the state of domestic affairs. He assigns as a cause of the change which the sentiments of the people had lately undergone, and the excitement which it had occasioned, the tyranny of the Duchess of Marlborough over her mistress. "By an excess of goodness," (he is speaking of the queen,) "she delighted to raise some of her servants to the highest degrees of riches, of power, and of honour; and in this only instance can she be said to have grieved any of her subjects.

"The rule which she had prescribed to these persons as the measure of their conduct was soon departed from. But so unable were they to associate with men of honester principles than themselves, that the sovereign authority was parcelled out among a faction, and made the purchase of indemnity for an offending minister. Instead of the mild influence of a gracious queen governing by law, we soon felt the miserable consequences of subjection to the will of an arbitrary junto, and to the caprice of an insolent woman.

"Unhappy nation! which, expecting to be governed by the best, fell under the tyranny of the worst of her sex! But now, thanks be to God! that fury, who broke loose—who broke loose to execute the vengeance of Heaven on a sinful people, is

restrained, and the royal hand is reached out to chain up the plague."

Whatever we may think of the cause which this letter was written to advocate, there can be but one sentiment upon such unmeasured abuse, poured upon a lady whose husband was at that moment engaged abroad in the service of his country. That the Duchess of Marlborough, like all other court favourites, in some instances abused the power she had obtained, is doubtless the fact: but to represent her as "a plague," and "a fury broke loose to execute the vengeance of Heaven on a sinful people," is a strained hyperbole which nothing but the indiscriminating hate of faction could have suggested. St. John's gallantry and love of truth were evidently not proof against his desire of rhetorical effect; and he has calumniated the duchess, by calling her the worst of her sex, merely that he might flatter his mistress in antithesis, by styling her the best.

This was the first prominent production of St. John as a political writer, and it had all the success which the exquisite ability it displays promised. It appeared during the progress of the elections; and so sensible was its effect upon the minds of the people, that the Whigs put forward their most trusted champions to neutralize its influence. Manwayring in the Medley, and Addison in the Whig Examiner, put a lance in rest against the new adventurer. Sir Richard Steele, under the names of Isaac Bickerstaff and the Censor, mingled in the fray. But the Tory

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was supported by the favour of the spectators; and, however signal might have been his defeat, they never would have believed their favourite beaten. St. John, however, was well able to maintain his ground even in a field where such men as these disputed; and so important was the contest deemed, that Earl Cowper, who yet held the seals, intermitted his labours as a judge to assume the task of controversy. His answer is in the form of a letter to Isaac Bickerstaff, published in the Tatler; and this tract, and that which occasioned it,—exhibiting, as Sir Walter Scott observes,* the singular picture of two statesmen, each at the head of their respective parties, condescending to become correspondents of the conductors of the periodical writings on politics, —afford a sure proof of the extensive influence which these writings must have acquired over the mind of the public.

The chancellor, in his reply, attempts to sow dissension in the Tory camp, by showing how little the views of Harley and St. John were in accordance with those of the ultra members of their own party. In this he was doubtless correct. These ministers never scrupled to express their contempt for Dr. Sacheverell, and the principles to which he was deemed a martyr: and the little patronage that puppet of their faction ever received at their hands, was granted rather to the coarse wit of Swift, than

* Somers' Tracts.

to their gratitude for the advantages they had reaped from his prosecution.

The earl turns with justice upon St. John the accusation of governing the queen by court intrigue. It was rather a bold method of attack, to revile the Whigs for maintaining their power by the agency of a woman, and to follow their patroness with reproaches after her influence had ceased — when we find that the accusation came from men who had gained their ascendency by the same means, and by the use of an instrument immeasurably more base. While St. John was pouring forth his invective upon the duchess as the worst of her sex, did it never occur to him, with how much more force such an epithet would apply to the woman who owed her very means of existence to her bounty, yet insidiously supplanted and then openly insulted her? The earl had some reason to accuse the writer who could praise the creature, yet revile the benefactress, with being intoxicated with the fumes of his own oratory.

The chancellor's defence of the continuance of the war is not so good: perhaps the position he had to guard was more open to attack. Addison, who had preceded him, had gathered few laurels in the contest; and the earl was content to throw out vague charges of Jacobitism, and to magnify the terrors of French ambition.

We have dwelt with more minuteness upon this

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production of St. John, because it exhibits him as placing himself at one stride at the head of all the party writers of the day; calling into action by his attack the most reserved force of his opponents, and, if the suffrages of the majority be allowed to decide the victory, inflicting upon them by one blow a signal and decisive defeat.

CHAPTER VII.

Measures of the New Ministry.—Debate upon the War in Spain. —Investigation of the Public Accounts.—St. John's Speech.— Commencement of the Negotiations for Peace.— Condition of France and Spain.

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Some measures were of course to be taken to justify the entire change of ministry which the queen had made. In the house of lords, an inquiry was instituted into the conduct of the Spanish war; and the disastrous battle of Almanza was eagerly seized as a theme upon which much censure might be poured forth. The Earl of Peterborough, who had been superseded in his command by the Earl of Galway, was by no means disinclined to enter into the views of the new ministry. Upon the evidence they obtained from him, the lords made a representation to the queen, in which they declared, that by not supplying the deficiencies of the men given by parliament for the war in Spain, the late ministry greatly neglected that service which was of the greatest importance.* They attributed to their mismanagement the battle of Almanza, and all the disasters by which it was followed; and passed a vote of thanks

* Parl. Hist. vi. 997.

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to the Earl of Peterborough for the conduct which had influenced the ministry to supersede him.

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If the justice of these votes was doubtful, their usefulness to the new ministry was sufficiently evident. A disastrous battle was a misfortune which the people could well appreciate; and they are seldom critically accurate in fixing the due portion of blame upon the parties who deserve it. The resolutions of the lords were generally approved, although they were very partially supported by the evidence upon which they were professedly founded. The Duke of Buckingham only said, what the rest of his party thought and acted upon, when he declared, that they had the majority and would use it, as he had observed done by others when they had it on their side.*

The commons, with the same design, instituted an inquiry into the management of the revenue: and the public were astonished by the bold declaration, that there were upwards of thirty-five millions of the public money unaccounted for. The debate occurred upon a motion for a committee of inquiry. To the defence which the few remaining friends of the Whigs set up, and to the eloquent vindication of himself which the Earl of Godolphin had delivered in the lords, St. John replied: "Some perhaps may wonder that any man should be found so resolute and magnanimous as to expose himself and his own safety to dangers at this time, in support of the de-

* Burnet.

clining state of our government and religion; but it is a much greater object of wonder, that any man within this house should be so bold as to oppose an inquiry into the public money, when, if this should be neglected, our kingdom and government cannot stand. I believe no news was ever more acceptable to the people of England, than that the public accounts were to be settled. Who can be a friend to these men, but such as are either enemies to their country, or would themselves plunder the treasury? Though in prosecuting those who have had the management of affairs during the war, I may be moved with no less contempt than hatred; yet I would rather have them dismissed with condign punishment than contempt. But among all their odious acts and dispositions, there is not one that appears to me so intolerable, as that they do not now endeavour to ruin us and the church by means of their thieves and usurers only; nor yet by the agency of wretches abandoned from an innate improbity,—desperate through want, or adorned by rapacity and the fortune of war with the spoils of all nations;—but through the instrumentality of men distinguished for humanity and mercy: and those whom they have not yet been able to ruin by their taxes, their rapine, their violence, their power, their injustice, and a mighty armed force—even all of you, my fellow-citizens, they now meditate to overthrow by your own authority, your own religion, and your own votes."

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St. John's speech upon this occasion is thus reported by an historian by no means well affected to him or his party. The author wrote in Latin; and he was not improbably seduced by the example of the historians whom he has so assiduously imitated, to put in the mouths of his characters, not what he knew they did say, but what he thought they might have said. St. John was certainly highly esteemed by the nation at this time as a high-church champion; but it is scarcely probable that he would have been introduced as talking of the church and our religion upon such an occasion, had not the historian sought an opportunity of remarking, that this religion, of which he was so careful, he had everywhere disgraced by his incontinence.*

St. John was answered by Walpole with great spirit. "It is obvious," he replied, according to the same author, "that the people of England are at this moment animated against each other with a spirit of hatred and rancour. It behoves you, in the first place, to find a remedy for those distempers which at present are predominant in the civil constitution; and unless you reject this inquiry with becoming indignation, I leave you to conjecture the

* Cunningham's History of Great Britain. The words used are, "Religione, quam St. Johnius ubique gentium stupris polluerat." Cunningham gives a very confused account of this affair of the thirty-five millions, as it was called; and he cites no authority for the speeches he professes to report. He was an envoy from George I. to Venice.

situation to which this kingdom and government are likely to be exposed."

The committee was however appointed: and upon their report the house, on the 24th of April resolved, "That of the moneys granted by parliament, and issued for the public service, to Christmas 1710, there were 35,302,107*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.*, for a great part whereof no accounts had been laid before the auditors, and the rest not prosecuted by the accountants and finished."

Against this resolution of the commons, Walpole wrote two pamphlets—"The Debts of the Nation Stated and Considered," and "The Thirty-five Millions accounted for;" two performances which drew from Manwayring an opinion that he was the best master of figures of any man of his age.

It does not appear that this question was ever brought forward with a view to charge the Earl of Godolphin, against whom it was principally levelled, with corruption. The charge was, negligence in the performance of a duty in which the greatest punctuality should be preserved. This appears from the two resolutions with which the commons dismissed the subject. They resolved, "That the not compelling the several accountants duly to pass their respective accounts, had been a notorious breach of trust in those that of late years had had the management of the treasury, and an high injustice to the nation:" and, "That the several accountants who had neglected their duty in passing their accounts

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ought no longer to be entrusted with the receiving the public money."

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It appears that these resolutions were fully warranted by the facts; and the proof offered by Walpole, that this money had been duly expended, by no means answered the charge of negligence in not having before formally accounted for it. Cunningham says, that St. John was the chief instigator of this inquiry, and that Harley entered into it with reluctance. Swift, however, who was far more likely to know the fact, speaks differently, and intimates that St. John gave great offence to his party by the light manner in which he spoke of this affair in the house of commons.* This is an additional ground for suspecting the authenticity of the speech given by Cunningham.

The Harley administration had entered upon office with the promise of establishing a secure and honourable peace; an event absolutely necessary to England, but exceedingly dreaded by her allies. Since the rejection by Marlborough of the favourable terms which had been offered last year, another campaign had been fought, and its event was by no means so successful as previous conquests had led the nation to anticipate. In the battle of Mons, Victory indeed still sided with her favourite; but she appeared in none of the splendour with which she had usually shone when Marlborough was in the field. The success of the allies extended only to

* Swift's Journal.

routing part of the enemy, and causing the rest to retire: their slain amounted to 20,000, while that of the enemy was not half that number. Upon the Rhine, the army of the emperor had been repulsed with loss: and in Spain and Portugal a series of reverses had commenced, which tended more than any other circumstance to diminish the terror of the British arms, and to stop the panic which late successes had spread among the French. A.D. 1711.

This unlooked-for turn of fortune operated to raise the tone of the French monarch in negotiating for peace. Perhaps, also, he might derive some assurance from the character of the men with whom he had now to treat, and who, he well knew, were pledged to put an end to the war. In an early number of the Examiner, their partisans had said, "We have not the least reason to doubt but the ensuing parliament will assist her majesty with the utmost vigour, until her enemies again be brought to sue for peace, and again offer such terms as will make it both honourable and lasting; only with this difference, that the ministry perhaps will not again refuse them."

They had given Louis yet plainer proofs of their anxiety for the discontinuance of the war. During the reign of William, one Gaultier, a priest, son of a merchant settled at St. Germain's, came to England with Tallard, the French ambassador. Having for some time performed the duties of chaplain to the embassy, he was taken into the family of

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the Earl of Jersey, who had been ambassador at France after the peace of Ryswick, and whose lady was a Roman catholic. In this situation he became acquainted with Matthew Prior; who, having held the offices of secretary to the embassy under Jersey, and before that of secretary to Lord Portland, was well versed in the political relations of the period. Gaultier was a shrewd and prying priest, and made such use of the opportunities he possessed, that he soon acquired an insight into the affairs of England. When, therefore, the rupture between the two countries obliged Marshal Tallard to return to France, he thought this ecclesiastic a useful agent to leave in the kingdom. He instructed him to continue in London so long as the authorities would permit him; to observe everything that happened, to collect every scrap of intelligence that might fall within his reach, and to transmit full reports to the French ministry. Discretion and secrecy were enjoined as the first objects of his care; since it was of more importance to his employers to retain an agent in the kingdom, than to obtain an isolated piece of intelligence at the risk of the destruction of every channel of intrigue with the country.

Gaultier punctually followed the instructions he had received: he wrote but seldom, and the French minister affirms he gave no intelligence of any consequence during the whole course of the war. Thus his residence in London created no suspicion; and he officiated as chaplain to the embassy from the Arch-

duke Charles, who was here officially recognised as King of Spain.* CHAP. VII.

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The Earl of Jersey was connected with Harley; and when the views of his party were directed to a peace, he remembered his old chaplain as a man likely to suit their purpose. Through this channel several distant intimations were conveyed to the French court of the changes which were in agitation, and the revolution which would then take place in the national councils. But it was not until they were established in office, and had secured a decided majority in the commons, that they ventured to send their agent upon a secret mission to Versailles. Their first steps were still taken with great caution. The Earl of Jersey was the person appointed to communicate to Gaultier his instructions, and these were to be verbal.

The communication of this messenger went only to say, that the ministers whom the queen had now entrusted with the government of her kingdom were desirous of peace, and thought it necessary for the welfare of England: that it was not in their power to set on foot a private negotiation with France, being obliged for their own safety to use great circumspection: that the king must therefore again propose to the Dutch to renew the conferences for a general peace: that as soon as they were opened, the ambassadors from England should have such particular orders, that it would no longer be in the power of the Dutch to prolong the war.

* De Torcy's Memoirs.

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Big with the importance of his communication, the triumphant ecclesiastic hurried to the court of his sovereign, and announced himself as the bearer of the pacification of Europe. "Do you choose peace?" said he: "I am come to enable you to conclude it independently of the Dutch—a people unworthy of the king's consideration, and of the honour he has done by applying so often to them."

The Marquis de Torcy, nephew of the celebrated Colbert whose genius rendered this reign the Augustan era of France, remarks, that to ask Louis at that time whether he chose peace, was the same thing as to ask a person lingering under a dangerous malady whether he chose to recover. Yet it was not without opposition that the bare letter of compliment, which was all that Gaultier asked as a basis for future communications, was granted him. The Dutch had lately been boasting that the king would soon offer more advantageous terms than those which the allies had lately rejected. Their object was to amuse the people with hopes from the continuance of the war, and to render them insensible to the miseries it had occasioned them. But the members of the council of Louis had been nettled by the boasting of these "gentlemen pedlars;" and they advised, that Gaultier should be sent back to England without any answer to the proposals he had brought. Their opinion was, that after the degrading demands which had been made at the conferences at Gertrudenberg, a proposal for new

negotiations would not only compromise the dignity of their master, but would also confirm the reports the Dutch had already industriously spread, that France was unable to endure another campaign, and that she must at last yield to whatever conditions the allies should please to prescribe. De Torcy, however, saw more clearly the extremity to which his country was reduced; and his influence with his master was as powerful as it was merited. The required letter of compliment was given to Gaultier for the Earl of Jersey, and an answer was returned, that although Louis, irritated at the conduct of Holland, would hear nothing of a renewal of the negotiations through that government, yet he would with pleasure treat for peace by the interposition of England.

The new ministry were satisfied with this answer; and Gaultier was instructed to invite Louis to deliver a proposal which England might submit to her allies. The king caused a memorial to be drawn up, in accordance with the desire of the English ministry; and Gaultier, who was commissioned to carry it to London, set out upon his return, the 28th April 1711. In this, however, little attention was paid to the hopes the ministry had expressed, that the king's offers by the interposition of England would not be less than those which he had lately made at the conferences of Gertrudenburg.

Since these conferences had been broken off, an event had occurred which tended considerably to alter the relations of the belligerent parties. Philip

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of Spain had hitherto been entirely dependent upon his grandfather for retaining his throne. But when the Spanish troops, alone and unsupported, had gained a decisive victory over an English army, and could number eight brigades of British troops among their prisoners of war, a new era occurred. The national spirit, which had been crushed by the power of the competitors who were struggling for their country, revived. The archduke was hated by them; Philip had been diligent to gain their affections. The cause, which had been considered only the cause of France, now became that of Spain. The people were suddenly sensible that they could defend themselves and any monarch of their choice, and they declared that monarch to be Philip. The death of the dauphin had indeed rendered it more necessary for the allies, if they pursued the object for which they had commenced the war, to insist upon his expulsion. The French king, in the hour of his humiliation, had at Gertrudenburg offered not only to abandon him, but also to assist to dethrone him. Now, however, the position of affairs was altered. His troops were no longer required in Spain: the efforts of the Spaniards had enabled him to withdraw them; and their presence in his own kingdom had chiefly enabled him to survive the campaign, which he had looked upon as pregnant with his destruction.

It was not probable therefore, with all these circumstances in his favour, and knowing also that he was to treat with a ministry pledged to procure a

peace, that Louis should abide by the offers he had made when his fortunes were at a much lower ebb. The death of the emperor had also so altered the relations of the contending powers, that the requisitions which had been at one time considered as the prime objects of the war, ceased to be points of primary importance. The allies had dreaded the aggrandizement of the house of Bourbon, and therefore they had supported the archduke. But when it became plain that that prince must succeed to the empire, they felt little disposition to continue the sacrifices they were making, in order to raise a power which would be little less exorbitant than that against which they were allied.

Since the terms of this memorial were much modified in the subsequent negotiations, it is unnecessary to notice its details. It was sufficiently moderate to induce the ministry to make it the foundation of a peace, and they immediately forwarded it to the Hague. All the negotiations which followed were entirely the work of St. John. It is said that he was the only member of the cabinet who was acquainted with the French language.* It was by St. John that the propositions of France were forwarded to Lord Raby, the ambassador at the Hague.

* Macpherson, vol. ii. p. 530.—Bolingbroke upon this occasion took the pains to make himself master of the Spanish language; and we are told, upon the authority of Pope, that, after three weeks' application, he was able to hold a correspondence with the Spanish ministers in their own tongue.—*Spence's Anecdotes.*

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They were accompanied with instructions to communicate them to the pensionary, and to assure that minister that the queen was resolved in making peace, as in making war, to act in perfect concert with the States, and to desire that the secret might be kept among as few as possible. He was instructed to confess that the terms of the several propositions were very general; and that there was an air of complaisance shown to England, and the contrary to Holland, which might threaten ill consequences: but that these could never occur, so long as the queen and States took care to understand each other, and to act with as little reserve as became two powers so nearly allied in interest. And Raby is instructed to assure the pensionary, that "this rule on our part shall be inviolably observed."

The answer of the pensionary was expressed in terms of equal fidelity and confidence. They urge the necessity of an entire confidence one with another at this critical juncture; and declare that they will take no step, in any kind of negotiation which regards the mutual interests of both nations, but in communication and concert with her majesty.

From these specimens of the correspondence between the two governments, we should infer that they were completely identified in their policy. But time, which has brought the secret transactions of the period to light, has shown us that St. John and the pensionary were at the time diligently engaged in counterplotting each other.

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While the English ambassador was waiting for an answer to the communication he had made from his court, the Dutch had privately despatched an agent to Versailles, and endeavoured to gain with Louis all the merit of advancing the peace they could not avert.* Their object was to obtain a strong barrier towards France; and now that England refused any longer to continue the war, they wished to get the greatest share of the advantages of peace. But the information of St. John was too good to allow this intrigue to pass undiscovered. Louis would gladly have corresponded separately with his enemies; for while he kept them both in good humour by promises of individual gratification, he might then have played them off against each other. In St. John, however, he had an opponent little more scrupulous or less sharp-sighted than himself. Instructions were immediately sent to Gaultier, to require that the French court, in their answer to the Dutch, should decline any negotiations for peace unless conveyed through England: and Louis complied with the request. Their imperious conduct at the conferences of Gertrudenburg had furnished him with sufficient excuse for returning this reply: but it must have been no small source of confidence to him, in conducting his negotiations, to know that he had succeeded in dividing his enemies; and that those who were a short time before firm in their determination to prosecute the contest, were now, with opposite views, eagerly and

* De Torcy.

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separately seeking an opportunity of putting an end to it.

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It cannot be denied, that this false position in which England was now placed, was the consequence of the selfish policy of St. John and his colleagues. That the country wanted peace, he insists upon with reason in his works; and that it was necessary to the existence of his ministry, he does not hesitate to admit. But if England was exhausted by the attack, France was not less enfeebled by the defence; and although the country desired peace, it was in a situation to demand that it should be honourable and secure. The basis of the popularity of the Tories was their opposition to the war: but that man could assert but questionable claim to patriotism or honour, who in deliberating upon the proposals of an enemy, should hesitate to reject them lest he should thereby compromise his own and his party's interest. That the undissembled eagerness of the Tories for peace gave confidence to the tone of France, and distracted the councils of the allies, must be admitted by all: and we fear it is no less indisputable, that that eagerness was prompted chiefly by a consideration of the interest of their party, and influenced but slightly by any regard for the welfare of their country.

CHAPTER VIII.

Guiscard's attempt to assassinate Harley.—Its effect in strengthening the Ministry.—Harley created Earl of Oxford.—Commencement of the Jealousy between him and St. John.

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After the reply of Holland had been received, the negotiations were suffered for some time to languish. Their prosecution was interrupted by a circumstance which threatened an abrupt termination to St. John's career. Upon St. John and Harley at this time hung the fortune of Europe; and the success of the attempt now made upon their lives would have involved consequences, which, whether happy or disastrous, must have been of the greatest moment.

A man of pleasure himself, St. John was readily accessible to those who joined in the same pursuits; and his leisure hours were often passed with men who were little fitted to be the companions of a minister of state. Among these was a Marquis Guiscard, a French refugee,* who, by his conversational talents and devotedness to dissipation, had acquired the intimacy of the new secretary. It was an intimacy, however, which subsisted only over the

* This man's original name was the Abbé de Bourlie.

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wine-cup and at the brothel;—the companions of St. John were never suffered to become the friends of the secretary: and a dispute about the issue of some low intrigue abruptly destroyed the connexion.

Guiscard had held the rank of colonel in the British army, and had on several occasions behaved himself with such gallantry as to elicit the praise of the commander. He was present in the disastrous battle of Almanza, where his regiment was cut to pieces; and as it was not again formed, he lost his pay. Under these circumstances, he thought, with some reason, that he was entitled to a pension from the government he had served; and during the existence of the Godolphin administration he made frequent applications to that effect. But his intimacy with St. John and others of his party rendered him an object of suspicion to the Whigs, who then needed all their patronage to preserve their friends, and were little inclined to strengthen the hands of their enemies. His applications were disregarded; and Guiscard solaced himself with the reflection, that in the change which was evidently approaching, he who had suffered for his intimacy with the Tories in their adversity would not be forgotten in their prosperity. As soon therefore as the new ministry was formed, the marquis renewed his claims. But the quarrel between him and St. John had occurred meanwhile, and he found the secretary but little disposed to forward his case. Overcome by his importunities, St. John at last

promised to mention him to the queen; and although the marquis owed little to the zeal of his advocate, Anne recognized the justice of his claim, and ordered him a pension of 500*l.* a year. But other difficulties arose in his way: Harley entertained a personal dislike to him, and was perhaps jealous that St. John should possess any part of an influence which he intended to monopolize. He insisted upon reducing the pension to 400*l.*, and refused to place it upon the fixed establishment. This Guiscard attributed to a petty vindictiveness in St. John; and enraged by his disappointments, he made several attempts to obtain an interview with the queen. Failing in all his endeavours, he determined to abandon all hopes of advantage from England, and to try to make his peace with his own country. With this view he opened a correspondence with the French ministry, and promised that from the facilities he possessed of obtaining information, he would soon merit a restoration to his rank and fortune. His communications with the French court were conducted through a M. Moreau, a banker at Paris; and to diminish the chances of discovery, his letters were sent to the latter by a circuitous route. They were in the first instance sent to a person in Portugal under cover to the Earl of Portmore, who was then ambassador at that court. The earl, having some suspicion as to the contents of the packets which were passing through his hands, opened one of them, and discovering the nature of the corre-

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spondence, immediately sent it back to his countess, by whom it was delivered to Mr. Harley.

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Now that suspicion was once aroused, Guiscard was closely watched; and a second packet was soon after intercepted, addressed to the same person. What the contents of these packets were has never been declared; but many have alleged that they contained only loose reflections upon the ministry, and perhaps promises of more important communications. That they contained any information of moment, is not probable; for it does not appear that Guiscard enjoyed any opportunities of acquiring intelligence; but his behaviour when accused certainly betrayed a consciousness of guilt. But whatever may have been the nature of the correspondence, he was apprehended in St. James's Park, under a warrant signed by his old friend St. John, and carried immediately before the privy council to be examined upon a charge of high treason. So terrified was he upon being captured and disarmed by the messenger, that he begged him to kill him, and seemed at once to have abandoned himself to despair. In the room at the Cockpit, in which he was confined while a committee of the council were assembling, he found a penknife which lay in an inkstand upon the table; and, determined either by his own or his enemies' hands to escape the stroke of the executioner, he secreted this about his person.

When brought before the council, he had recovered his presence of mind, and answered the questions

which were put to him by St. John with an unaltered countenance. The examination was drawn out to some length; and St. John, who sat near the prisoner, changed places with Harley, in order that he might be able to observe with more accuracy his emotion when the extent of the evidence was discovered to him. He had hitherto preserved the confident air which he had assumed; but when St. John, pursuing his examination, asked him whether he knew such a person residing at Paris as M. Moreau, (producing at the same time the intercepted correspondence,) his assurance left him, and despairing of a pardon, he sought only to involve his enemies in his destruction. When the letters had been read, he earnestly requested to speak to Mr. St. John in private, having much, as he said, of urgent importance to communicate. But St. John had little wish now to reconcile himself with his discarded friend, and his refusal in all probability saved his life. He told him that his request was impracticable and unusual--that he was before the council as a prisoner charged with high treason, and whatever he had to offer in his defence he must state before them all. The marquis persisting in his desire to speak only to St. John, Harley was rising to ring the bell for the messengers to remove him; which he observing, remarked, "*Voilà qui est dur !—pas un mot !*"

Disappointed in his design against St. John, who sat out of his reach, he turned suddenly upon Har-

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ley, and exclaiming, "*J'en veux donc à toi !*" drew forth the knife he had concealed, and stabbed him in the breast. The blow fell upon the breastbone and the blade of the knife brake : but Guiscard, not perceiving this, continued repeating his blows, while the council were stupified by the suddenness of the assault. "The villain has killed Mr. Harley !" exclaimed St. John, as he drew his rapier, and rushing forward to his friend's assistance ran the assassin through the body. The council-chamber was now in the most tumultuous confusion : some of the members took up chairs to defend themselves ; several swords were directed against the desperate man, who by his obstinate resistance evidently courted death at their hands. The tumult within attracted the attention of the messengers in waiting ; and one of them rushing in, seized the marquis, and in securing him gave him a blow upon the back, which laid him at their feet, and which afterwards was adjudged to have occasioned his death.

As the knife had broken upon the breastbone, Harley's wound was of course not very serious ;* but it was sufficiently so to confine him for some time to his room.† Guiscard's hurts were more severe.

* Swift says he measured with his finger the distance of the scar from the spot where a wound would have been mortal. It was about half the breadth of his nail.—*Swift's Journal.*

† Concerning this event St. John writes, "It is impossible to express to you the firmness and magnanimity which Mr. Harley showed upon this surprising occasion ; I who have always admired him never did

Obstinately resolved to avoid the ignominy of a public execution, he for some time refused all medical aid, and, after lingering a few days, died from a mortification of the contusion he had received from Wilcox the messenger.

This desperate attempt created no small sensation at the time, and was of great use to the ministry, since the high-church party, who were wavering and jealous, were ashamed of opposing men who had nearly lost their lives by disconcerting the designs of a papist and a Frenchman,—two characters which were objects of their special abhorrence. It also occasioned an act, which was immediately passed, at the instance of the queen, making it felony to attempt the life of a privy counsellor.*

The objects of this attack derived yet more immediate advantages from the danger they had escaped. The popularity of Harley, which had been upon the wane, suddenly returned. The people beheld in the attack upon his life an evidence of his sincerity to his country's service ; and they reasoned, that from the attack having been made by a Frenchman, he must be formidable to their old enemy. This circumstance, originating in accident, and having only private revenge as its object, was mag-

it so much. The suddenness of the blow, the sharpness of the wound, the confusion which followed, could neither change his countenance nor alter his voice."—*Letter to Mr. Drummond*, March 13, 1710-11.

* An act was also passed to indemnify those who had wounded Guiscard.

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nified into a national cause; and the people were taught to consider Harley as a man who, by his services to his country, had incurred the especial hatred of its enemies.

This feeling in his favour, which pervaded the country, found a voice in the commons. Upon taking his seat in the house after his recovery, he was congratulated by the speaker in a strain which evinced the disposition of that assembly to support his administration, and discovered how much his wound had increased their confidence in him. That the highly flattering address which greeted him upon this occasion was prompted by the feelings of the house, and not by the private sentiments of the speaker, we have sufficient assurance from the well-known repugnance which the latter entertained to Harley, and the private hostility which always subsisted between them.

The attempt of Guiscard, and the feeling it induced, furnished to Anne the opportunity she sought of rewarding her favourite minister. His talents for managing the commons, which had recommended him to the leaders of the Godolphin administration, he had long since diverted to the more profitable and less arduous purpose of governing the queen. The leadership in the commons he had abandoned to St. John, who soon acquired an ascendency in that assembly which nothing but superior intellect can attain. It was St. John who, in the lower house, proposed and defended every measure of the govern-

ment. By his industry, no less than his eloquence, he laboured to convince the country of the immensity of the sacrifice which had been made for the prosecution of the war; and he drew from the state of the finances the only valid argument he could adduce in favour of the peace he was about to conclude.*

While so tried a champion remained to fight the battles of the ministry in the commons, Harley could withdraw without prejudice to their interest; and the queen gratified herself and her people by bestowing upon him the titles Baron Wigmore, and Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, and creating him lord high treasurer; an office which he had long in effect held, but to which he was not until now formally appointed.

But although the attempt of Guiscard was thus immediately advantageous to the objects of his re-

* Swift has drawn St. John's character at this time. He says: "I think Mr. St. John the greatest young man I ever knew: wit, capacity, beauty, quickness of apprehension, good learning, and an excellent taste; the best orator in the house of commons; admirable conversation, good nature, and good manners; generous, and a despiser of money. His only fault is talking to his friends in way of complaint of too great a load of business, which looks a little like affectation; and he endeavours too much to mix the fine gentleman and man of pleasure with the man of business. What truth and sincerity he may have, I know not. He is now but thirty-two, and has been secretary above a year. He turns the whole parliament, who can do nothing without him."

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venge, in its ultimate consequences it proved disastrous to both. The flattering distinction of being looked upon as a martyr, was too alluring to both to be retained or resigned without a struggle. Harley had endured all the pain and danger of the wound, and he thought himself entitled to monopolize the honour of the traitor's hatred. It was, however, generally considered that St. John was the first object of his vengeance, and that it was only when foiled in his purpose that he turned upon Harley. St. John was not inclined to refuse his countenance to a view of the circumstance which was calculated to increase his importance with his party; and Harley felt jealous and aggrieved.

This is the first symptom we have of that gradual change in the sentiments of these two great men towards each other, which afterwards rendered them from the warmest friends the most irreconcileable enemies. Harley had doubtless long before indulged a jealousy of St. John. Even at the formation of his ministry he had endeavoured to give him a rival who might detract from the influence he had acquired in the commons. The great talent of Walpole, afterwards Earl of Orford, had already made itself apparent; and Harley made every effort to gain him.* He made the most flattering advances; told him he was worth half his party, and pressed him to continue in administration. When entreaty failed, he had recourse to threats, but equally in vain:

* Coxe's Walpole, 33.

Walpole was neither to be seduced nor intimidated; and St. John remained the ministerial leader of the commons.

This jealousy in Harley does not appear to have been seen or resented by the secretary, and it had never hitherto been so shown as to occasion any interruption of their friendship. But on the occasion of the attempt of Guiscard, it broke forth openly, and became known to all the ministerial scribes. The conduct of Swift upon this occasion shows that he was not so perfectly independent as those imagine who judge only from the account he gives of himself in his Journal. He had undertaken to write an account of the scene in the council-chamber at the time Harley was stabbed; but upon discovering the difference which had arisen upon this subject between that minister and St. John, he seems to have thought that, however he might treat the subject, he must lose one of his patrons. He must either admit that St. John was the first object of Guiscard, and offend Harley; or he must deny that he was at all concerned in the matter, and incur the displeasure of St. John. Neither of these alternatives suited him, and he abandoned his work, which he had already commenced.*

* This is confirmed by the account Swift himself gives of the transaction, in his Memoirs relating to the change in the queen's ministry. The manner in which Swift speaks of St. John at this time is very contradictory. It would not,

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Desirous, however, that a minute account of the circumstance should be preserved, he delivered his MS. to Mrs. Manly—a lady already well known by her amorous poetry, and in political literature by her communications to the Examiner—with hints for the completion of the pamphlet. Mrs. Manly executed her task with more regard to the wishes of the parties interested than to truth. Afraid to assign to St. John the honour—for such it was esteemed—of being the first object of attack, she supposes that Guiscard's idea in wishing to speak privately with St. John, was to get him and Harley together, so that he might have an opportunity of killing both: and she asserts that, after dealing the blow which brake the blade of the knife, Guiscard rushed forward to attack St. John; a circumstance incompatible with all the more genuine accounts of the transaction.

The change of style, from the nervous language of Swift to the tawdry bombast of Mrs. Manly, sufficiently indicates the part which each had in the composition of this pamphlet.*

however, be difficult to cite numerous passages from his works, which prove that he considered himself decidedly attached to Harley and his personal interests. Many years afterwards he told Bolingbroke, "You were always my hero:" and perhaps he then thought so; for Bolingbroke was still his friend, Oxford was dead, and Swift's memory was bad.

* It is published in Lord Somers' Tracts, vol. xiii.

These minutiæ are only worthy notice as they show that the seeds of dissension in the ministry were already sown; and that their counsels were so loosely kept, that it was evident even to their humblest followers that the interests of St. John and the premier were separate.

CHAPTER IX.

Negotiations for Peace resumed.—Prior appointed Ambassador to the Court of Versailles.—Preliminary Demands.—Mesnager's Embassy.—His Conduct in the Negotiations.

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THE accession of honour as well as popularity which the ministry had gained, by no means diminished the necessity for peace. Unable while the tide of public feeling ran so strong in their favour to attack them openly in the house, the Whigs were yet able to cause them much embarrassment. The threats of the moneyed interest were not vain: the funds were in their hands, and by depreciating the public credit they rendered peace more than ever necessary.

St. John—for, as we have before observed, he was almost the sole conductor of these negotiations—was distracted between the two necessities he laboured under, of concluding the war speedily and honourably. "Make a safe and honourable peace," was Walpole's only reply to Harley, when he repeatedly entreated him to moderate the violence of his opposition: and St. John well knew, that while nothing else but an immediate termination of the war would satisfy the

people, no terms that could be obtained from Louis would be sufficient to realize what the Whigs now understood by the terms safety and honour.

The negotiations were, however, to be proceeded with; and the interest of the Earl of Jersey and the friendship of St. John advanced Mr. Prior to the post of ambassador upon this important work. Mr. Prior had before been sent upon a secret embassy respecting the same business: and although his journey was known in England by an accident which occurred to him on his return,* his conduct had obtained for him the approbation and confidence of his employers. The caution of St. John in his choice of subordinate agents is strongly exemplified by his conduct upon this occasion. Prior had been already employed by his party, and was recommended by the interest of some of his most powerful coadjutors. The persecution he had suffered from the Whigs attested his fidelity; and the strict private friendship which subsisted between him and the secretary shows that St. John was not doubtful either of his talent or integrity: but it is a remark which applies to his whole career, that he never allowed his private partialities or friendships to individuals to interfere with his conduct towards them in his ministerial capacity.†

That Mr. Prior was a man of talent and integrity,

* Political State.

† This is admitted even by Mr. Coxe, and is no small merit in a man so addicted to pleasure as Bolingbroke was.

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he knew; but that his powers extended to a capability of conducting affairs of such momentous importance as those in which he was now called to take part, was a fact which he had not yet proved. His instructions were therefore of the most limited character: had Marlborough himself been their ambassador, his powers could not have been more restricted. They were couched in these terms: "Mr. Prior is fully instructed and empowered to communicate our preliminary demands to the court of France, and to bring back their answer." These laconic instructions bore the queen's signature, and were accompanied by the document to which they refer.

The preliminary demands now delivered formed a singular contrast to those which had been before offered by Louis and refused; and still more so to those which had been insisted upon by the allies at the conferences at Gertrudenburg. England no longer insisted upon the expulsion of Philip from Spain, or required Louis to join in effecting the dethronement of his grandson. True, the fortune of the war had materially changed, and the relations of the parties had undergone such alterations, that the house of Austria was now become as legitimate an object of jealousy as that of Bourbon: but after the preponderance of the Bourbons had been declared to be the cause of the war,—and after the sacrifices by which that war had been carried on, and the magnificent successes with which it had been attended,—the nation expected something more than a declaration

that the crowns of France and Spain should never be united upon one head;—a declaration which might have been obtained at the very commencement of the struggle, and which was now all that could be obtained after it had been prosecuted at the expense of a hundred millions of money and a countless waste of human life.

Thus was the great object of the war abandoned. In return for this concession, England demanded some advantages for herself, and some for her allies.

The primary object of the Dutch was to obtain a barrier of fortified posts in the Netherlands; and this was stipulated in their favour, together with a security for the protection of their commerce.

A similar demand was made on the part of the empire for a barrier on the side of the Rhine: and for Savoy it was stipulated that the strong places which had been taken should be restored.

The claims of the rest of the allies were to be settled during the negotiations.

For herself, England demanded as the object of her greatest solicitude, that the protestant line of succession as established by parliament should be fully acknowledged; that a new treaty of commerce should be made; that the fortifications of Dunkirk should be demolished; and that Gibraltar and Port Mahon be ceded by Spain, and Newfoundland and Hudson's Bay by France.

A Briton must blush to find, that among the

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methods by which England proposed to recruit the losses she had suffered in the prosecution of an ill-managed, and, for a long time, unnecessary war, the chief and most favourite project was the extension of her traffic in human beings. Thus, no point was insisted on with more pertinacity, than that England should have four towns in the West Indies, situated conveniently for the protection of this trade, and for refreshing and exposing for sale the slaves.* The cold-blooded cruelty which could calculate upon such practices on an extensive scale as a desirable source of national emolument can find no palliation in any superiority of talent. St. John was here content to share the worst prejudices of his age, and discovered that he had little real perception, even in theory, of that lofty morality upon which in his works he so often expatiates.

Such were the demands which St. John committed to the hands of Mr. Prior. The only advantages they claimed were some commercial facilities, by which the country might hope to retrieve her almost sinking credit, and to shake off the shackles which the war had riveted around her. The objects of the war were entirely abandoned, and all that was now sought was some indemnity against the immense losses which had been sustained. A peace upon these terms might, from the condition of the nation, be necessary—it certainly could never be esteemed honourable.

* De Torcy.

But, moderate as was the tone of these demands, the French king was not disposed to accede to them unconditionally: and as the ambassador had no power to discuss or mitigate the articles, Louis was perplexed between the danger of breaking off all negotiation, and admitting demands which he now deemed unreasonable.

To obviate both these evils, the French court resolved to remove the seat of the negotiations to London: and Prior returned with Mesnager, a man whom the French minister describes as thoroughly informed of the advantages which the English would receive from the King of Spain, and well acquainted with the commerce of the Indies, which he had made his peculiar study. With this man's arrival in England, which was in August 1711, the negotiations may be said to have seriously commenced: and we have a letter of St. John's to the French minister De Torcy, of this date, acknowledging his arrival, and anticipating favourably from the circumstance.*

Mesnager's instructions were to offer peace to the empire upon the terms of the treaty of Ryswick: but he was to demand, as an essential condition, the restoration of the Electors of Cologne and Bavaria to their dominions, honours, and dignities. For herself, France demanded the restitution of Lisle, Tournay, Aire, Bethune, and Douay.

The ambassador was also empowered to promise, on behalf of the King of Spain, an extension to the

* Bolingbroke Correspondence, i. 175.

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English of the privilege, which he had some years before granted to a company of French merchants, of transporting slaves to America; and that he should assign to them some places in the New World, where they might refresh and sell them. His powers in respect to England went, in fact, almost to the full extent of the preliminary demands; but he was warned to use them with discretion, and to obtain conditions for every concession.*

From St. John's correspondence at this time we learn the multitude of his occupations, and the immense application which he found necessary to fulfil them. Although labouring under a severe and most painful complaint, we find him constantly complaining that he has been for two days together unable to leave his office; and often, in the evening of the post-day, that his correspondence has not suffered him to lay down his pen the whole day.

During these conferences at London, the labours of St. John were not diminished. He was joined with the Earls of Oxford and Jersey, the Duke of Shrewsbury, and Lord Dartmouth, in a commission to treat with the French envoy. The part he took in the conferences which took place with Mesnager will form a specimen of the ascendency which he had over his colleagues in all questions of foreign policy.

The first conference took place at the Earl of Jersey's; at which Mesnager expatiated upon the

* De Torcy.

concessions which his master was induced to make on behalf of British commerce, and the vast advantages which must accrue to England from the king's interposition in favour of their commerce in America. While he dwelt upon concessions to be made, he was listened to with the greatest attention: but when he came to speak of the conditions upon which Louis promised these advantages, St. John suddenly interrupted him, and saying that they were then only discussing the terms to be granted to England, and that those of the king and his allies were to be reserved for the conferences for the general peace, put an end to the conference.

The next morning St. John called alone upon Mesnager, and stated the queen's surprise at his proposing to enter into a detail of articles relative to the king's expectations, at the commencement of a negotiation which ought to be confined entirely to the interest of Great Britain: he therefore begged him to declare whether he was authorized to settle the points which related to the English only. Mesnager had such authority, and he was now compelled to avow it; a circumstance of no small advantage to England in the conduct of the negotiations.

We find St. John on several other occasions treating alone with the French envoy; and on the 3rd September a conference was held, at which Oxford, St. John, Dartmouth, Jersey, and Prior were present. When they were assembled, (says the minis-

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ter who has given us a detailed account of all these negotiations,*) St. John, better versed in the French language and more eloquent than Dartmouth his colleague, assumed the lead. He attempted to prove that their present business was only to settle the advantages which England was to derive from the peace. So soon as this article was fully agreed to, the queen his mistress would, he said, transfer her whole attention to the interests of France; that her majesty had ordered a packet to be prepared to carry over the express which Mesnager wished to send to his court: but that they were previously to resume the argument, and a more determinate answer must be given to the several articles in dispute. To this Mesnager promised acquiescence.

The first condition was the entire demolition of the works which the king had erected at Dunkirk, as well upon the land as towards the sea. Mesnager in vain offered the destruction of the Risbau and the forts towards the sea. They were inflexible. The fortifications of a town so situated gave too much uneasiness to England, to suffer them to stand. There was no other way than to yield. Mesnager, however, in giving up this point, complied with his instructions, in demanding a suitable compensation for this extraordinary concession to the Queen of Great Britain. This was to procure, at the concluding of the peace, an equivalent for razing all the

* De Torcy.

works that had been erected for the defence of the town of Dunkirk, and the security of its harbour.

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Mesnager proposed as an equivalent, the restitution of the towns of Lisle and Tournay. The ministers assured him that the queen really intended the king should be indemnified; but as to the quality of the indemnification, they said it was impossible then to determine it. After the article of Dunkirk, they proceeded next to the securities which England demanded for her trade in America: they pretended that the only security the King of Spain could give to please them, was to deliver up some towns in the West Indies, as Prior had mentioned at Fontainbleau.

Mesnager declared they must not expect the King of Spain would ever admit of such a pretension. "What advantage, then," said they, "shall we obtain for our trade?"—"You shall have," replied Mesnager, "an exemption from the duties of Cadiz and the Indies for all the commodities of the growth and manufacture of England."

They asked, whether that advantage would be granted only to England, or whether other nations would likewise enjoy it? "I know," said Mesnager, "that when I was at Madrid, the King of Spain intended to lay a duty of at least fifteen per cent. upon all goods, as well at Cadiz as in the West Indies, and to impose it on all nations alike."

St. John asked, whether the French did not

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enjoy that same exemption which his catholic majesty was willing to grant to the English? The King of Spain, he was answered, had not yet explained himself with respect to this article; but he showed, from the particular privileges that would be extended to the English merchants, besides the negro-trade and their exemption from the beforementioned duties, that the English would be more favoured in their commerce than any other nation in Europe.

The proofs he gave were not sufficient to persuade the ministers. They asked him again, what security they should have of enjoying the privileges which he vaunted so highly? He proposed that the treaty should be confirmed and sworn to at the assembly of the states of Castile. "Such assemblies," replied Oxford, "sunt magni nominis umbræ."

"Would you be satisfied if Cadiz be confided to a Swiss garrison?"—"The expedient," said the ministers, "would be an excellent one for the officers and soldiers of Switzerland; but would be of no use at all to England."

He then offered Port Mahon as a security. They replied, that Port Mahon was an excellent security for the commerce with the Mediterranean: but what had Port Mahon to do with America?

St. John continued to insist on the necessity of letting England have some settlements in the West Indies for the security of her commerce. He concluded however with demanding, as an indemnifi-

cation for the King of Spain's refusal, that he would consent at least to let the English enjoy the negro-trade for thirty years. This was a long term; yet Mesnager made answer, that he was convinced the king would employ his good offices to procure this new advantage for the English.

St. John wanted something more, as he said himself, intending to specify what it was in a memorial concerning the different questions discussed at the conference.

In vain did Mesnager endeavour to introduce the interests of the Electors of Cologne and Bavaria: they repeated the same answer as before, and referred this article to the general conferences of peace.

St. John having finished the memorial, gave it to Mesnager at a fresh conference held at Prior's, the 9th Sept. It was a representation of the several demands made by England.

To these demands the King of France transmitted his minister power to accede: and De Torcy gives a characteristic account of the manner in which this information was received by the English ministers.

"The Abbé Gaultier set out with the new memorial and the king's instructions to Mesnager, and arrived in London the 23rd of September. Prior sent word directly to the Earl of Oxford. The ministers commissioned by the queen came to town from Windsor. In the mean time Mesnager, together with the Abbé Gaultier, waited upon the lord treasurer, at eight o'clock the same evening. The joy

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that minister received from the king's answers, though he had only a general idea of them, appeared in the hearty welcome he gave to Mesnager, more than in a profusion of expressions. He familiarly kept them to supper. After the servants were gone, he told him that he treated him as a friend; that he looked upon the king as England's good ally; and then he drank the health of his majesty, of the dauphin, and of his ministers.

"The ministers appointed by the queen met the next evening at Prior's. They retired into a little room by themselves; and after Mesnager came, it was some time before he could obtain admission. Upon being introduced, he observed a great alteration in their countenances: the Duke of Shrewsbury, especially, seemed the most uneasy. However, they received him not only politely, but with great marks of satisfaction.

"At the opening of the conference Mesnager told them, that notwithstanding the just uneasiness it might give his master to see England refuse to take the least engagement in any of the points relating to the interests of France, yet his majesty was determined to comply with most of the conditions demanded by that crown. He showed his new power for signing as preliminaries the king's answers to their demands.

"The Duke of Shrewsbury read the power several times. Mesnager thought he read it with the attention of a person that wanted to find some flaw in it.

but if he had any such notion, he was disappointed; there was no fault to be found with the power. They proceeded therefore to read the answers.

"The English ministers still appeared to be in the same perturbation, especially Shrewsbury. Mesnager could not imagine the cause, much less what would be the issue of it.

"This uneasiness was in part owing to the natural timidity of the Duke of Shrewsbury. He had a thorough knowledge of the constitution of his country, and a sensibility of the dangers to which the ministers are exposed, either upon the accession of another prince to the throne, or upon a change of administration. The more he was acquainted with these matters, the more the apprehension of future inquiries disturbed his mind: it even impelled him, notwithstanding his gentle disposition, to speak in a rough manner to Mesnager at one of the conferences. And yet Shrewsbury was as desirous of peace as any one in the administration. They were all struck with the terror of a period which perhaps was not remote; and notwithstanding their good intentions, they were awed by this reflection. We must except St. John: he read the papers which Mesnager submitted to him aloud, and gave marks of approval to each article."*

This circumstance which occasioned the sudden consternation of the ministers, was the recollection that an act of parliament had some time ago de-

* De Torcy.

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clared it high treason for any minister to make peace with a prince who harboured the Pretender. St. John alone appears to have had firmness to disregard so absurd an enactment. His conduct throughout these conferences indicates the master-spirit; and, but for his resolution, it is probable that the negotiations would upon this ground have been abruptly broken off. Upon stating the difficulty to Mesnager, the sagacity of the Frenchman supplied him with a further argument in favour of assenting to the preliminaries; and forcible arguments were needed to convince his timorous colleagues, that with watchful enemies, ever ready to urge any advantage against them, it would be prudent to put their lives within the power of the law. Mesnager suggested that the articles they were now about to sign were not a peace, but merely the preliminaries of a peace, and consequently could not be within the scope of the enactment: and he hinted that the Chevalier St. George was then upon a tour in the provinces of France, and that possibly, before the general conferences for peace were opened, the cause of their uneasiness might be removed. The objection of Mesnager was deemed valid, and the ministers determined to proceed. But other objections were again advanced, and farther obstacles raised; and much delay occurred before the preliminaries were signed. These difficulties were at length overcome, and Mesnager returned with the document properly confirmed, to the French court.

CHAPTER X.

Expedition to Quebec designed by St. John.—Its failure.—Preliminaries hastily signed in consequence.—St. John's Private Life.—Formation of the Brothers' Club.

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THE English ministry had an object in view in the delays they had interposed to the completion of these conferences. They hoped, by securing great commercial advantages to the country, to protect themselves from the attacks which they well knew would be made upon them immediately the treaty they were negotiating was made public. To this object nothing would contribute more than the acquisition of some valuable portion of the New World; and this they were now expecting.

Early in this year St. John had listened to the proposals of a Colonel Nicholson, regarding an expedition against some of the French settlements in America. This officer had great experience in the nature of the country which he proposed to attack. He had in a former expedition taken possession of Nova Scotia and Port Royal, in the latter of which he left a garrison, having, in compliment to his sovereign, changed its name to Annapolis. The Indians

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he brought home with him for some time monopolized the attention of the public, and drew more general attention to his account of the advantages which would accrue to England from the conquest of the French possessions in North America.

St. John heard him, and entered warmly into his views; and an expedition against Quebec and Placentia was resolved upon. He appears to have assumed the whole responsibility of advising this expedition; he certainly was the only member of the administration who exerted himself in its preparation. A strong squadron of ships was prepared, under the command of Sir Hovenden Walker; and they were to be accompanied by transports, containing 5000 men, under the command of Brigadier Hill, the brother of Mrs. Masham, and the person who has already figured in the political history of this time as the ragged protegé of the Duchess of Marlborough. This was evidently St. John's own favourite measure. His anxiety with regard to it appears in all his confidential correspondence at this period.* He is continually instructing his agents abroad to circulate specious reports as to the destination of the expedition. These were not without avail: he suc-

* "I am glad to find that, whatever guesses curious people may make, there yet appears no more light into the secret of Mr. Hill's expedition. As that whole design was formed by me, and the management of it singly carried on by me, you will easily imagine that I have a sort of paternal concern for the success of it."—*Letter to Mr. Drummond*, June 26, 1711. Bol. Corr.

ceeded in causing great consternation in the French; who, in consequence of the insinuations of his agents, dreaded a formidable descent upon their coast.

The fleet sailed from Plymouth early in May, and received strong reinforcements upon their voyage. It had been concerted that a body of 4000 men should assemble at Albany, and march by land into Canada to co-operate with the expedition from England; and, from the care with which the preparations had been made, success was anticipated as certain.

But the correctness of Nicholson's plans, and the conduct of the leaders of the expedition, did not justify the confidence which St. John had reposed in them. So unprepared was he for failure, that upon receiving intelligence that the fleet had arrived at its destination, he wrote to the Earl of Orrery that the whole of North America was in the possession of the English.* The arrival of the fleet was, however, but the signal for the commencement of its disasters. A violent storm drove their ships among the rocks, destroyed eight of the transports and above eight hundred men. It was now discovered that the ships were too large to ascend the river; and that it would be impossible, with their present means, to attain the prime object of their expedition — the capture of Quebec. The fleet sailed back to Spanish River Bay, and a council of war was held to decide upon their future measures. As they were short of provisions, and could place no dependence upon New

* Boling. Corr.

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England for supplies, it was resolved to return home without farther prosecuting the enterprise.

Thus ended, in disaster and disgrace, an expedition in which St. John had embarked much of his reputation. It is probable that the ministry had early intelligence of the failure, and that this influenced them to despatch Mesnager with the preliminaries. No sooner was he gone than the affair was made known; and the public voice declared, not without some appearance of reason, that the safety of the expedition had been sacrificed to the ambition and incapacity of a favourite of the court.

Immediately afterwards the preliminaries which had been agreed upon were published in one of the political periodicals, by the ambassador of the emperor, to whom they had been confidentially communicated.* He was induced to take this step to embarrass the ministry and retard the peace, and he was punished for it by an immediate dismissal from the court.

St. John's occupations were at this time extremely multifarious and harassing; but, notwithstanding their pressure, he yet found time to enjoy the conversation of the literary men of his age. His conversational powers enabled him to shine with peculiar brilliancy at those periodical meetings of intimate friends which were at this time so much in fashion. Business appears to have at least temporarily weaned him from the habitual extravagances

* Political State.

in which he once indulged; and he seems now to have delighted to pass his hours of leisure rather in the enjoyment of the society of the talented than in the participation of the pleasures of the dissipated.

Thus we find him about this time complaining of the irregularities which had been introduced into most of the clubs of his party, and proposing the formation of a new one, in which the members should be less numerous and the intercourse more intellectual. In his letters to the Earl of Orrery, he states his views in the formation of this society:— "I must," he writes, "before I send this letter, give your lordship an account of a club which I am forming, and which, as light as the design may seem to be, I believe will prove to be of real service. We shall begin to meet in a small number; and that will be composed of some who have wit and learning to recommend them; of others who, from their own situations or from their relations, have power and influence; and of others who, from accidental reasons, may be properly taken in. The first regulation proposed, and that which must be most inviolably kept, is decency. None of the extravagance of the Kit Cat,* none of the drunkenness of the

* The Kit Cat Club was instituted in 1699. Its most illustrious members were Congreve, Prior, Sir John Vanburgh, the Earl of Orrery, and Lord Somers; but the members becoming more numerous, the most violent party obtained the majority, and the earl and his friends were less regular in their attendance. The October Club was also composed of Tories, but was looked upon with no favour

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Beefsteak, is to be endured. The improvement of friendship and the encouragement of letters are to be the two great ends of our society." And again to the same nobleman: "As to the club which I spoke to you of, I believe you will think it very well chosen; and you may be sure that you will be one of the first. There are about ten or twelve places filled: the remainder, to one-and-twenty, remain open for some of our friends who are abroad, and for such others as we shall in the winter in full chapter elect."

The establishment of a society such as this which St. John proposed, could not but have extensively beneficial effects upon the party to which the members were attached, while it strengthened the friendship which united its supporters. St. John promised himself as the happiest of its effects, that the men of genius by whom his administration was defended would have a corporation of patrons to protect and advance them in the world. He hoped that in the freedom of continual intercourse the folly of his own party would be ridiculed and checked;

by St. John and the government. It consisted of more than one hundred members of parliament, of the most violent Tory views. This subdivision of a party was for some time formidable, and once nearly fatal to the ministry. When the Whigs went out, they were for extreme measures against them; and when Harley and his coadjutors stepped between them and their prey, they became loud and angry in their expostulations. It was only fear of the common enemy which prevented them from open opposition.

The Kit Cat took its name from a pastry-cook, whose pies formed a regular dish at the suppers of the club.

and he knew that by the union it must effect, the opposition of the adverse party would be more powerfully resisted.

St. John's anticipations were fully verified: this society, under the name of the Brothers' Club, continued for some time to restrain the outburst of those elements of disunion with which the Harley ministry was so rife. To be a member of this club was esteemed a distinguished honour. They addressed each other as "brother;" and we find their ladies in their correspondence claiming to be enrolled as sisters.* The members of this club were the Dukes of Ormond, Shrewsbury, Beaufort; the Earls of Oxford, Arran, Jersey, Orrery, Bathurst; Lords Harley, Duplin, Masham; Sir Robert Raymond, Sir William Windham, Colonel Hill, Colonel Desney, St. John, Granville, Arbuthnot, Prior, Swift, and Friend.

The names of the members which constituted this society show that the rules which St. John laid down at its formation were exactly observed. They are all men who could boast either rank, talent, or interest; and in many these essentials were united.

We have here also a list of St. John's most intimate friends and most constant companions: and if some of them, such as Masham and Hill, were little worthy of his friendship, it must be remembered that they were probably tolerated only to pre-

* See Swift's Letters, *passim*.

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serve an interest with the queen; without which the political existence of himself and his friends depended only upon the breath of a jealous and not very efficient minister.

St. John's life at this time affords a fine practical specimen of the compatibility which he has insisted upon in his works,* of the enjoyment of pleasure with a constant discharge of public duty. In one of these he contends that the common—the sensual pleasures to which Nature prompts, and which Reason therefore does not forbid, though she should always direct, are so far from being excluded out of a life of business, that they are sometimes necessary in it, and are always heightened by it. He instances the pleasures of the table, which may be so ordered as to promote the confidence of friendly intercourse: and he fortifies his position with the authority of the elder Cato, who, in the midst of public duties, private studies, and an extreme old age, found time to frequent the sodalitates, or clubs of friends, at Rome, and to sit up all night with his neighbours in the country of the Sabines.

The eloquence of St. John, like the virtue of Cato, often glowed with wine; and none who knew him could affirm that he abstained in practice from the indulgences which he extended to public men by his precepts. In many instances, as he says, his pleasures were necessary portions of his business. At the societies of his party it was at once his task and his

* Spirit of Patriotism.

delight to cultivate friendships, and to compose differences of opinion; to recapitulate the past, and to prepare for the future; to reward the genius which laboured for his party, and to point out new subjects for its exercise.

Nor were his attentions confined to rewarding the past or directing the future performances of his literary friends. In many of the productions which were so celebrated in their day as masterpieces of political writing, the pen of St. John is frequently to be traced. The most celebrated of these writers submitted their more important efforts to his correction, and were often indebted to him for giving elegance to their sentiment and pungency to their satire. We know that this was the case with respect to the "Conduct of the Allies," a pamphlet published at this time by Swift, for the purpose of inclining the parliament, which was now about to assemble, to an immediate peace. The success of this pamphlet was unprecedented, and its effect was electrical. Yet it is well known that St. John contributed much to the correction of this work; and traces of his style are occasionally to be met with throughout it.*

These revisions were the produce of his social hours. It was in the moments of careless abandon-

* Some of the Whig writers declare that this pamphlet was entirely Bolingbroke's. Such a mistake manifests a strange ignorance of his style of writing, which is the very antipodes of Swift's.

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ment to the society of his friends, that he scattered those brilliant *jeux d'esprit*, and that sparkling wit, which were the theme of admiration among his friends, and were often extensively circulated to the confusion of his enemies.

It was not, however, among the literary men of his party that his leisure was wholly or even chiefly spent. The talent of Swift as a pamphleteer commanded the attention of the ministers; and his overweening vanity impelled him to retail to a foolish woman every minute acknowledgment of his usefulness which they accorded to him. In this account of his movements we necessarily meet with many notices of St. John. But since the Journal of the dean generally consists only of a recital of the common news of the day, and a faithful chronicle of the invitations he has received to dinner, St. John seldom figures in his narrative otherwise than as the secretary or the host. We may thank him, however, for the information he gives us with regard to some of the occasions where he came in contact with the secretary at the houses of third parties. He tells Stella* that his best night-house was Lord

* Swift's conduct to Mrs. Johnstone, whom he chose to celebrate by this name, is too well known to need animadversion here. The fate of Vanessa (Mrs. Van Homrigh) is yet more strange, but perhaps less pitiable. The silly vanity of these two ladies has been strangely commiserated as unrequited affection; and the heartless trifling of this reverend deceiver has received more indulgence than he deserved himself, or would have extended to another.

Masham's, where the rulers of his party were almost every evening assembled. The company, he says, usually consisted of Lady Masham, the lord treasurer; Dr. Arbuthnot, the favourite physician of the queen; St. John; and Mrs. Hill, of the bedchamber, sister to Lady Masham.

St. John then, notwithstanding the jealousy which was now known to subsist between him and the treasurer, was careful not to lose by inattention the interest of the cabal which directed the measures of the court. Again, he found the amusements of the drawing-room facilitate the designs of the closet: his presence and his address were necessary to counteract the subtle insinuations which the jealousy of Oxford was hourly suggesting.

Thus, as far as we have facts to guide us, the private life of St. John was at this time rational and consistent; and if, as the occasional remarks of his contemporaries seem to intimate, there were other points in which he laid less restraint upon himself, those habits were at least never suffered to interfere with his duties as a minister of state.

CHAPTER XI.

Meeting of Parliament. — Critical Situation of the Tories. — Creation of Peers.—Prosecution of the Duke of Marlborough. —St. John's exertions to increase the Unpopularity of the War.—The Multiplicity of his Duties.—His Intrigues against Harley.

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After the preliminaries of peace had been agreed upon, the intrigues of the empire and the remonstrances of Holland, although no less actively employed, became less powerful to embarrass the ministry. The arrangements for the general conferences were completed previous to the meeting of parliament.

This session commenced in December. The queen, in her speech,* declared that she was glad to be able to tell them that, notwithstanding the arts of those who delight in war, both time and place were appointed for opening the treaty of a general peace; and that she would endeavour that, after a war which had cost so much blood and treasure, they might find their interest in trade and commerce improved and enlarged by a peace, with all other ad-

* Parl. Hist.

vantages which a tender and affectionate sovereign could procure for a dutiful and loyal people.

This speech was too undisguised in its reflection upon the Whigs to be received without exciting a violent contest. In the commons, Walpole moved an amendment to the address; which was, however, negatived by an immense majority. And in the lords a yet more stormy debate succeeded. The Earl of Nottingham seceded from the ministry, and moved a clause in the address, that, in the lords' opinion, no peace could be safe or honourable to Great Britain or Europe, if Spain and the West Indies were to be allotted to any branch of the house of Bourbon. This was carried against the ministry by a majority of a single voice; and the Tories and their adherents were in the utmost consternation. The Whigs were so exasperated against the ministers, that their fall from power was considered by them only as the prelude to their entire destruction. In the moment of triumph, the Earl of Wharton is said — but upon very questionable authority—to have smiled and put his hands to his neck when any of the ministry were speaking, intimating that the head of the speaker was in danger.* Whether a gesture so ferocious can be justly attributed even to the Earl of Wharton, is very doubt-

* Swift's History of the Four last Years of the Reign of Queen Anne; a work in which, under the disguise of history, he takes every opportunity of pleading the cause of his party.

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ful; and whether the Whigs contemplated the severities which the Tories dreaded, is yet more questionable. But it is certain that the terror of the adherents of the administration was sincere. The queen was believed to have joined the Whigs; and even Mrs. Masham for a moment thought that her influence was gone. Swift was in terrible consternation: he begged of St. John to send him abroad; and told the Earl of Oxford that he should have the advantage of him, for that the earl would lose his head, but he should only be hanged, and so carry his body entire to the grave.*

Amid the general panic of his party, St. John alone was sufficiently calm and self-possessed to remedy the confusion which the negligence of Oxford had created. His exertions in the commons, where his eloquence had contended with unqualified success against that of Walpole,† had reanimated his party, and perhaps recalled the wavering favour of his mistress. When his party were downcast and dejected,

* Journal to Stella.

† Walpole was now rapidly rising to that estimation which he afterwards attained. In his "History of the Four last Years," Swift says, "*One* Mr. Walpole proposed an amendment to the address," &c. This was written when his apprehensions had subsided: but at the time of the minister's defeat, his fears conquered his affectation of contempt. Giving an account to Stella of a lampooning ballad which he had written upon the Duke of Nottingham, he says, "I heard at court that Walpole, *a great Whig member*, said that I and my whimsical club writ it at one of our meetings, and that I should pay for it."—*Journal*, Dec. 18.

his countenance was cheerful, his voice confident, and his counsels energetic. He urged the timorous and procrastinating Oxford to the only measure which could retain his party in power; and if his counsel and his language show but little delicacy for the constitution of his country, his resolution in emergency pointed him out as the support and leader of the ministry. The house of lords were now in opposition: the queen, notwithstanding the doubts which had been entertained, proved firm in her adherence to the cabal, which patronised the Tories: twelve new peers were created; and St. John is reported to have declared that they should have three times as many more if these were not enough.*

Some years after, when his object was to exculpate himself and to censure Oxford, he could discover that this sudden creation of a majority was an unprecedented and invidious measure, to be excused by nothing but the necessity, and hardly by that. There is sufficient evidence to show that he heartily concurred in, and probably originated, this unprecedented and invidious measure; although the credit of Oxford with the queen rendered him the only person who could put it in execution.

This extreme expedient re-established the supremacy of the Tories, and the Whigs were now exposed to the vengeance they had threatened. The

* When these peers took their seats, the Earl of Wharton ironically asked them whether they intended to vote by their chairman.

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first object of the victors' resentment was Walpole, who had shown himself too dangerous an opponent to be allowed to continue his opposition with impunity. He was proved to have been concerned in some clandestine practices with regard to the forage contract in Scotland, while he held office under the old ministry. There can be no doubt that he in effect sold the contract for 500*l.*, since he was confessedly privy to his nominee receiving that sum for it. Very violent speeches were made against him in the commons: Sir Peter King declared he deserved hanging, and St. John was also among the foremost of his accusers. The house voted that Walpole had been guilty of a high breach of trust and notorious corruption: he was expelled the house, imprisoned in the Tower, and declared incapable of sitting in the present parliament. This is an important circumstance in the history of St. John, since it assigns the cause of that merciless and persevering personal hostility which characterized Walpole's future conduct towards Bolingbroke.

The Duke of Marlborough was the next object of this minister's attack: he had headed, perhaps contrived,* the late attempt; and the ministry determined to humble the Whigs in the person of their chief. It is much to be regretted that this great man's conduct gave too much colour of justice to the prosecution which was commenced against

* De Torcy.

him from factious motives. A commission, which had been appointed for examining the public accounts, reported that the duke had received an annual bribe of 5000*l.* or 6000*l.* from the contractors of bread to the army; and the queen, upon so grave a charge, made from such a quarter, declared she could not do otherwise than dismiss him from all his employments, that the matter might be impartially examined. This prejudgment of his case savours much of the violence of faction; but the sequel of the investigation showed that, though his disgrace was premature, it was not unmerited. Other charges were now brought forward: his having received large yearly bribes from Medina, a Jew, was made too clear to be questioned. He was charged with having misappropriated much of the 10,000*l.* a year he received from the queen to defray the charges of intelligence; and he was proved to have deducted two and a half per cent. from the pay of the foreign troops maintained by England: the commons voted that these practices were unwarrantable and illegal, and that the deduction was to be accounted for as public money.

Although it cannot be denied that such practices were sordid and disgraceful, we can accord no praise to the ministers for exposing them. St. John and his colleagues, as appears from his letters, knew of them while they continued him in office. Their object was not the punishment of a public

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delinquent, but the ruin of a powerful enemy. According to De Torcy, his influence had prevailed even upon the officers of the queen's household to vote against her in the division upon the address: and Oxford and St. John, when they remembered how near they had been to ruin, and how their mode of escape had exasperated their enemies, and startled even their friends, thought it would be rather rashness than clemency to spare so dangerous and implacable a foe.

This strong measure of creating a majority in the lords could be justified only by its necessity in self-defence, and could be protected only by the favour of the people. The Tories satisfied themselves and their adherents by magnifying the violence of the Whigs; and St. John undertook the task of conciliating the people. They were already sufficiently discontented with the continuance of the war, and sufficiently enraged against those who advocated it. To increase that discontent, and point their indignation, St. John employed himself in drawing up accurate computations of the numbers of our own men, and a comparison of them with the numbers of foreigners, who had been employed in the war. The same course was adopted with regard to the number of ships contributed by England and her allies. The items in which she had exceeded, and they had fallen short of, the stipulated contingents, were pointed out; and the

sums paid by way of subsidy were accurately stated and put prominently forward.

By this statement the eyes of the people were opened to the immense sacrifices which had been already made. They saw that while the allies, by the exorbitance of their demands, attempted to destroy all hopes of peace, they were unable to contribute any material proportion to the prosecution of the war; and their indignation was raised to the highest pitch when they discovered, that the contest which had dazzled them by its glory, and exhausted them by its expense, had been entirely for the interest of her allies, not for that of England. They were convinced that, as the relations of Europe then stood, this country was uninterested in the disposal of Spain; and they felt with bitterness that England had been the outwitted tool of Holland.

The success of these labours of St. John was apparent in the conduct of the commons. They attended the queen with a strong representation of the hardships the allies had put upon England in carrying on this war, and how necessary it was to devise some plan of relief. They showed, from the accounts which had been laid before them by St. John, that the annual expenditure of England, which, at the commencement of the contest, amounted only to about three millions, was now increased to nearly seven millions; and that this immense

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increase was chiefly occasioned by the deficiencies of the allies. The States-General, they said, were frequently deficient two-thirds of the quota of the shipping they undertook to provide; which not only increased the charge of the English, but occasioned damage to their navy and the destruction of their commerce; since the British navy was employed in the service which the States had undertaken, instead of convoying their own merchantmen. In the Netherlands they had been deficient of their quota of troops upwards of 20,000 men. In Spain and Portugal the whole burden of the war had been thrown upon England; and even the emperor, who was most immediately interested in the success of the war in that quarter, had no troops at all in pay there till the last year of the war, and then but one single regiment. England, in Spain alone, maintained 60,000 men; and the charges of the shipping employed in that service only, amounted to no less than eight millions sterling. In every article she had exceeded her obligations, and in the course of the war had expended beyond her quota above nineteen millions of money.

The representation declared that all this had been not only connived at, but in many instances contrived and encouraged upon private views; that the greater had been the success of the war, the heavier had the burdens of England become;—new dominions had been conquered for the allies, while they excused themselves from any contribution to the ex-

pense; and it was not to be expected that they would ever be weary of enlarging their territories at the charge of England, when even the revenues of the conquered countries were not applied to defray the expense of prosecuting the war.

They represented that, though Britain had borne so great a share in the contest, no advantages had been stipulated for her; but, on the contrary, the barrier-treaty with the Dutch was destructive to her trade; and the putting Newport and other places in Flanders into their hands, made the trade of the English to the Spanish Netherlands precarious: and the strength of that country, which Britain had so largely contributed to increase, might hereafter be employed against Britain herself.

The representation concludes by imploring the queen to rescue her people from those evils which the private counsels of ill-designing men had exposed them to, and so to amend the treaties with the allies, that they may consist with the interest of Great Britain, and with a real and lasting friendship between her majesty and the States-General.*

This representation, which was drawn up by Sir Thomas Hanmer, who was chairman of the committee appointed for that purpose, assisted by Oxford, St. John, and Swift,† was intended at once to punish and repress the intrigues which the States and the

* Parl. History, vol. vi.

† In his History of the Four last Years, Swift, with more justice than modesty, describes this representation as written with much energy and spirit.

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empire had been carrying on against the ministry, and to assure them they had nothing to hope from the countenance and support of the Whigs. It was also a direct approval of the conduct of ministers throughout the period they had been in office, and supplied them with a reply to every charge of their opponents, that the measure attacked had been formally approved by the house of commons. It was well adapted to increase the confidence of France in the parties with whom she was negotiating; and operated powerfully to destroy the hopes which the allies still cherished of breaking off the negotiations and resuming the war. It at least made it apparent, that if the war was to be resumed, its expense would be no longer borne by England, while its benefits accrued to them.

To this representation the States published a reply, which was answered by St. John in a manner that gave them little cause to rejoice in the success of their production: the facts were strongly against them, and the secretary was not a man to overlook his advantages. The publication of this reply gave the last blow to the opposition of Holland, and she now reluctantly turned her attention in earnest to the negotiations.

The long and dilatory conferences which preceded the treaty of Utrecht were now commenced; and every letter of instructions which was given to the English plenipotentiaries proceeded from the pen of St. John. The whole thread of the nego-

tiations was in his hands,—without his aid they were at a stand: his most assiduous exertions were scarcely able to urge them forward. The interests he had to reconcile were the most jarring and discordant. In France he had an able opponent, but in the allies he had much more dangerous enemies. Averse to any peace, the object of every step they took was to perplex the negotiations, and to destroy, or at least delay, all hope of accommodation. No occasion was lost for raising impediments; and the most extravagant demands were advanced only to distract attention and to consume time.

Few tasks could be more harassing and disheartening than this in which the secretary was now involved. Difficulties which are foreseen and can be estimated, courage and perseverance may hope to surmount; but where the utmost exertion discovers no sensible progression,—where one height is gained only to show others steeper and more impassable,—the excitement must languish, and hope itself must droop. Even the opposition of the allies, who should have studied their own interest by cordially joining with him; and the apathy and indolence of his colleagues, whom duty, if not ambition, should have inclined to share his labours; were not the only difficulties with which St. John had now to struggle. The cause of the allies was warmly undertaken by the opposition at home; and no manœuvre was left untried to set the people

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against the court, and to make the very peace upon which the ministry hoped to establish their power the instrument of their overthrow.

After the morning had been consumed in correspondence upon the subject of the negotiations, the evening was employed in defending the instructions he had issued. He stated all the great questions that were brought before the house; he persuaded, he illustrated, he supported the resolutions which were taken upon them; he answered objections, and repelled attacks. And this was no trivial task. The opposition consisted of, with the single exception of himself, the most able and acute men in the kingdom, and possessed the most dangerous power which an opposition can wield. Eloquence may be met by eloquence, and spirited declamation may be easily answered, when it proceeds upon no extent of information or accurate knowledge of the subject it attacks. But the opposition against which St. John had nightly to contend had lately enjoyed the conduct of affairs, and were intimately acquainted with all the detail of office: no subject could be debated upon which they were not as well informed as himself; and the indulgence which had suffered many of their adherents to remain in office, was abused to the purpose of affording them information of every error, and early intimation of the most trifling informality.

The duties of negotiator, minister, author, and debater, were not the only calls upon his assiduity:

he had likewise to discharge the more minute offices of a courtier. In this capacity he had many and nice affairs upon his hands, and was obliged to enter into and manage private intrigues of a very delicate description. His quarrel with Oxford reduced him to the necessity of assuming this part, which he had hitherto neglected as suited neither to his taste nor character. So little attention had he formerly paid to the court, that we are told he was hated mortally by Lady Masham, and abominated by the queen; so that he must have fallen if he had not been necessary for the scheme of the peace, from being the only man about the court who could speak French.* But necessity and practice seem to have rendered him at length such an adept in court intrigue, that he could successfully contend even with Oxford, whose power had been entirely gained and wholly supported by its practice.

At the time the expedition against Quebec was projected, Oxford dared to refuse Lady Masham a request which she made with regard to the equipment of the fleet, and by which she intended to realize a large sum of money. The will of a favourite is not to be opposed with impunity by a courtier. To array conscientious scruples against her interest, was an indignity which the lady patroness of the ministry could never forgive. St. John saw his opportunity: with better tact and less scruple

* Stuart Papers.

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he told her that, in spite of Oxford's opposition, he would do it for her. He did so: and from that moment Lady Masham became his friend; and the influence of his rival was gradually, though perhaps hardly sensibly, upon the decline.* It was not without an end, therefore, that he was assiduous in his attendance at the evening meetings at Lady Masham's.

When we remember these multitudinous duties which he had to perform,—that he was successful in most of them, eminent in all, and surpassed in none; that the gravest duties were often intermitted for the loosest pleasures;—the nervous eloquence of the orator preceded or followed the smooth adulation of the courtier: whatever condemnation we may be induced to pass upon some of the objects for which he exerted his powers, we must acknowledge that those powers were of the highest order;—we must feel admiration of the talent which could support himself and his party against such a storm of opposition, such a weight of influence, and such a torrent of abuse, as at this time both they and he sustained.

In these labours St. John persevered until the prorogation of parliament, which took place early in July: a circumstance then occurred which entirely destroyed the little kindly feeling which he still entertained for Oxford, and determined him to attempt his overthrow.

* Stuart Papers.—Oxford's letter to the queen.

CHAPTER XII.

St. John raised to the Peerage as Viscount Bolingbroke.—His Discontent and Resentment against Harley.—The Negotiations resumed.—Bolingbroke sent upon a Mission to France.—Concludes a Suspension of Arms.—Rumours respecting Designs in favour of the Pretender.

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When the twelve peers were created, to procure a majority in the lords, they were naturally chosen from the supporters of the government; and St. John was of course entitled to the first place in the list: but the ministry would then be left without adequate support in the commons; and he consented to remain in the lower house for the present, upon an understanding that his peerage should be reserved for him, and that the rank of his title should give him precedence of those which were then created.

Since this promise had been made to him, the elder branch of his family had become extinct. The family title—that of Earl of Bolingbroke—had expired with Paulet St. John, who about a year before this period died without issue. This earldom St. John expected should be revived in himself, and he was naturally ambitious of retrieving the expiring honours of his family. Oxford had received an equal

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rank for no more assiduous services: the business of the peace was still in St. John's hands; and what he might not expect from gratitude, he might hope from interest.

His expectations were disappointed and his request refused. The jealousy of Oxford would not allow him to bestow upon his rival a rank which had been deemed sufficient for himself. St. John was therefore created Viscount Bolingbroke and Baron St. John; and his title was limited, in case of his death without issue male, to his father, Sir H. St. John, baronet, and his heirs male. Such was the reward of twelve years constant service;—a reward far inferior to that obtained by one who was perhaps less able, certainly less deserving; and scarcely distinguishable from that bestowed upon a herd of others who had done little to deserve any distinction at all.*

That the fiery temper of St. John should feel indignation at the treatment he received was to be anticipated; that he should be able to control that indignation, is more than was to be expected. But so it was: his party feeling, or his love of power, triumphed; and he continued to keep measures with his colleague.

In a letter written at this time, he describes his feelings of the injustice he conceived himself to have sustained: "I am to thank you, my lord," he writes,†

* St. John was now thirty-four years old.

† Letter to the Earl of Strafford, 23rd July, 1712. Bol. Cor.

" for the very kind part which you took in the honour her majesty was lately pleased to confer upon me. It would ill become the friendship I profess to you, if I did not naturally own what passes in my soul upon this subject, and confess to you, what I will do to no one else, that my promotion was a mortification to me. In the house of commons, I may say that I was at the head of business; and I must have continued so whether I had been in court or out of court. There was, therefore, nothing to flatter my ambition, in removing me from thence, but giving me the title which had been many years in my family, and which reverted to the crown about a year ago by the death of the last of the elder house. To make me a peer was no great compliment, when so many others were forced to be made, to gain a strength in parliament; and, since the queen wanted me below stairs in the last session, she could do no less than make me a viscount, or I must have come in the rear of several whom I was not born to follow. Thus far there seems to be nothing done for my sake, or as a mark of favour to me in particular; and yet, farther her majesty would not go without a force which never shall be used by me. I own to you that I felt more indignation than ever in my life I had done; and the only consideration which kept me from running to extremities was that which should have inclined somebody to use me better. I knew that any appearance of breach between myself and the lord treasurer would give our common ene-

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mies spirit; and that, if I declined serving at this conjuncture, the home part of the business would, at least for some time, proceed but lamely. To friendship therefore, and the public good, if I may be pardoned so vain an expression, I sacrificed my private resentment, and remain clothed with as little of the queen's favour as she could contrive to bestow."

Time and adversity were not sufficient to reconcile him to the insult which he considered Oxford had offered him upon this occasion. Long afterwards, when misfortune and exile should have taught him to forget the dissensions which had caused his fall, he remembered and resented the refusal of the earldom. In his letter to Sir William Windham, giving a summary of his conduct at this time, he says: "For the part I acted in the prosecution of these views of the Tories, as well as of all the measures accessory to them, I may appeal to mankind. To those who had the opportunity of looking behind the curtain I may likewise appeal for the difficulties which lay in my way, and for the particular discouragements I met with. A principal load of parliamentary and foreign affairs in their ordinary course lay upon me; the whole negotiation of the peace, and of the troublesome invidious steps preliminary to it, as far as they could be transacted at home, were thrown upon me. I continued in the house of commons during that important session which preceded the peace; and which, by the spirit shown through the whole course of it, and by the

resolutions taken in it, rendered the conclusion of the treaties practicable. After this I was dragged into the house of lords, in such a manner as to make my promotion a punishment, not a reward; and was there left to defend the treaties almost alone.

"It would not have been hard to have forced the Earl of Oxford to use me better. His good intentions began to be very much doubted of: the truth is, no opinion of his sincerity had ever taken root in the party; and, which was worse perhaps for a man in his station, the opinion of his capacity began to fall apace. In the house of commons his credit was low, and my reputation very high. You know the nature of that assembly: they grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged. The thread of the negotiations, which could not stand still a moment without going back, was in my h nds; and before another man could have made himself master of the business, much time would have been lost, and great inconveniences would have followed. Some, who opposed the court soon after, began to waver then; and if I had not wanted the inclination, I should have wanted no help to do mischief. I knew the way of quitting my employments, and of retiring from court, when the service of my party required; but I could not bring myself up to that resolution, when the consequence of it must have been the breaking of my party, and the distress of the public affairs. I thought my mistress

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treated me ill; but the sense of that duty which I owed her came in aid of other considerations, and prevailed over my resentment. These sentiments, indeed, are so much out of fashion, that a man who avows them is in danger of passing for a bubble in the world. Yet they were, in the conjuncture I speak of, the true motives of my conduct; and you saw me go on as cheerfully in the troublesome and dangerous work assigned to me, as if I had been under the utmost satisfaction. I began, indeed, in my heart to renounce the friendship which till that time I had preserved inviolable for Oxford. I was not aware of all his treachery, nor of the base and little means which he employed then, and continued to employ afterwards, to ruin me in the opinion of the queen and everywhere else. I saw, however, that he had no friendship for anybody; and that with respect to me, instead of having the ability to render that merit which I endeavoured to acquire an addition of strength to himself, it became the object of his jealousy, and a reason for undermining me. In this temper of mind I went on, till the great work of the peace was consummated, and a treaty signed at Utrecht; after which a new and more melancholy scene for the party, as well as for me, opened itself."

That the dread of the breaking of his party and losing his power—perhaps the conviction that the interests of his country required a peace which he

alone could bring about—induced him to stifle his resentful feelings, is very probable.

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That friendship for Oxford gave weight to these considerations, is not likely: Oxford always affected a reserve towards his colleagues, and often resolved upon important measures without their concurrence or even knowledge. Lord Harcourt complained that, although he was lord chancellor, he knew no more of what was going on than his groom: that the secretary visited him but very seldom, and the lord treasurer did not even know him.* The information of the secretary was often not much more exact than that of the chancellor; but St. John was not a man to caress the hand which treated him with indignity. Oxford, in a letter to the queen, written some time after this period, declares that so early as February 1710 there commenced a division among the Tories in the house of commons, and that St. John thought fit to be listing a separate party for himself; that this spirit in him was discernible at the opening of the parliament in November preceding, when he complained much that Oxford had not acquainted him with the secret of raising money for the current service of the year, and particularly of his having concealed from him his favourite scheme for liquidating nine millions of the national debt. Oxford insinuates that St. John's dissatisfaction upon this account proceeded from the most unworthy motives, and that he suggested the facility with

* Stuart Papers.

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which 100,000*l.* could have been deducted from so large a sum, and divided by Oxford among his friends.

This grave accusation must rest solely upon the authority of the lord treasurer,—an authority not very weighty, when it is remembered that it was a charge made by a rival, unknown to the party accused, and uttered with all the expectation of security which is warranted by the confidential nature of the communication. On the other hand, the character of St. John tends to rebut the charge. That he was not very scrupulous in the employment of means, must be admitted by his most ardent admirers, but the ends for which those means were employed were always honourable; and, whatever censure he may incur for his eager pursuit of power, he has never been reproached with the ignoble vice of avarice, or the vulgar crime of peculation. Oxford, in constituting himself his accuser upon this ground, has tempted posterity to inquire into his motives; and probability favours the supposition that it had its origin in that hatred which sprang, phœnix-like, from the ashes of their departed friendship.

The negotiations at Utrecht slowly progressed, and had the Dutch preserved any decency in their opposition, might probably have been much longer delayed. Their violence in abandoning the Duke of Ormond, who had the command of the British army, and their insolence in seducing part of his troops and refusing a passage through their cities

for the remainder, provoked reprisals. The English general seized upon Ghent; his government approved his conduct, and the British plenipotentiaries were directed to let the Dutch ministers at Utrecht know that the queen was determined by their late conduct, to make peace either with or without them.*

A suspension of arms in the Netherlands was now agreed upon between England and France, and the details of the treaty had been in a great measure determined upon: the grand article remaining was the prevention of the union between France and Spain, and this was to be arranged during the cessation of hostilities. But many difficulties arising about that and some other points of importance, which could not easily be adjusted, either between the plenipotentiaries at Utrecht, or by correspondence between De Torcy and the ministry here, it was determined to send some person to France who might remove the remaining difficulties, and put a final hand to these dilatory negotiations. For this purpose who could be so well fitted as the man who had managed them throughout, and was therefore master of every question they embraced?

Bolingbroke was immediately despatched; and his powers were ample.† His instructions authorised him to negotiate everything necessary for settling the treaty of peace in such a course as might bring it to a happy and speedy conclusion. He was em-

* Report of the Secret Committee. † Bol. Corr.

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powered to agree to a general suspension of arms by land and sea between Great Britain, France, and Spain, to continue for four months, provided France and Spain would previously give positive assurances that they would make good the terms demanded by England for the Duke of Savoy, and would also adjust the forms of the renunciations to be made by both the sovereigns in order to prevent the contingency of their dominions ever becoming united.

France espoused the interests of the Elector of Bavaria as warmly as England did those of the Duke of Savoy; and the adjustment of the terms which were to be granted to that prince formed also a part of Bolingbroke's instructions.

This embassy was also to explain all doubtful articles which related to the advantages Britain was to derive from the treaty, and to obtain from France what, in the language of diplomacy, was called her ultimatum upon the general plan of peace, and to communicate the determination of England to impose no conditions upon her allies, but to leave those who refused to concur with her entirely at liberty to obtain the best terms they could.

The great questions involved in these instructions, show this to be a mission of the very first importance, and not what Oxford afterwards declared it to be, an embassy for which there was little occasion, and undertaken only to put Bolingbroke into good-humour.*

* Oxford's Letter to the Queen.

He was received by the French court with all the distinction due to the eminence of his station and talent. He succeeded in establishing a better understanding between the two crowns, and obtained many of the concessions he was instructed to demand. His residence, however, in the French metropolis was but of short duration: a few days sufficed him to fulfil the duties he had undertaken. He was accompanied upon this embassy by Prior, who remained behind to complete several points which he was obliged to leave unsettled. The first object of his mission, which was to prevent any farther actual hostilities, he accomplished; and in signing the treaty for a suspension of arms upon the terms specified in his instructions, he obtained the honour to which he had long aspired,—that of putting an end to a war which, during its ten years' continuance, had injured the commerce, drained the resources, and diminished the influence of his country.

His conduct in managing this affair received the full approbation of his sovereign, but was not therefore less liable to attack from his enemies.*

* Some years after, Horace Walpole writes to Lord Townshend an account of some obsolete scandal he had heard in Paris about Bolingbroke, during his residence in the French capital. According to this letter, De Torcy threw in Bolingbroke's way Madame Tencin, at that time so celebrated for her beauty and accomplishments. The inflammable secretary eagerly seized the bait; and the lady, acting under De Torcy's instructions, contrived to steal some papers which that minister wished to see. That Bolingbroke formed

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Charges the most inconsistent, and censures the most contradictory, were advanced against him. He was accused of openly courting the society of the Pretender, and of avowedly espousing his cause. The understanding between them was, it was said, not sought to be disguised. He sat in the next box to him at the opera, and was content to be numbered among his adherents. The organs of the opposition teemed with innuendoes upon the real motive of his journey: it was declared that the liberties of England were again to be confided to the mercy of the Stuarts; that the Pretender was already upon his journey towards the coast, and a project had been formed by which he was to be joined with the queen in the government.*

These rumours, which were spread as instruments of opposition by an incensed party, appear ridiculous to us, who know how baseless the event proved them to have been; but at the time they were promulgated, they were not without their effect. The queen refused to issue the severe proclamations against her brother which the terrors of her people required; and many still doubted the sincerity of her wish that the crown should pass from her family. Still more suspected the intentions of her

a connexion with Madame Tencin, is very probable: the honour of inventing the rest of the story we may without much danger divide between the Parisians and Horace.

* Two letters published in the Flying Post at this time, and purporting to have been written from Paris, contain these assertions.

ministers, who had little to hope from the house of Hanover, and everything to fear from the resentment of the Whigs. These suspicions were not entirely unfounded: Oxford was at this time in correspondence with the exiled prince; and although his object was probably nothing farther than security in the event of a revolution, which he thought not improbable, the weight of his name animated the adherents of the chevalier, and gave vigour to a languishing cause. He appears to have thought that Bolingbroke was concerned in a similar intrigue, but without reason. We have not only his own assertion, but we have also the testimony of those who were in the confidence of the Pretender, that at this time the secretary had no other view than to secure the quiet succession of the Elector of Hanover.* These intrigues, which the confidence of the chevalier's agents in England made them divulge, were sufficient to lend colour to the most absurd tales; and many even of the most reflecting portion of the nation really dreaded some such event as was prognosticated.

That such reports should be believed, or even promulgated, evidences the feverish state of public feeling upon this subject; but the share which was attributed to Bolingbroke was easily refuted. More accurate information made it known that he could not have courted the society of the Pretender, for the simple reason that that person was not in Paris

* Stuart Papers.

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during any part of Bolingbroke's stay there. With a desire to avoid even the possibility of offence, the French monarch had sent the chevalier from his capital as soon as he heard of the British ambassador's approach, and he was detained in the provinces until Bolingbroke had left the kingdom.

A prejudice which accords with the interest of the party entertaining it, is not easily eradicated: the very precaution which had been taken to avoid suspicion of any designs in the chevalier's favour, was brought forward as proof of their existence. "We have already in our history," said many who scorned to be convinced, "an instance of a similar circumstance; and we are likely to see it followed by a similar event. When Cromwell's ambassador, Lockhart, arrived in Paris, Charles the Second was dismissed the court as the chevalier now is; yet that very Mr. Lockhart lived to walk the Mall between Charles and his brother, the one his sovereign, the other the Duke of York."*

* The Flying Post and the other periodicals of the day are replete with assertions and arguments of this quality.

CHAPTER XIII.

Bolingbroke's attempts against the Press.—His Failure.—He is refused the Order of the Garter, and his Disgust increased.—The Negotiations continued.—Conclusion of the Treaties of Utrecht.—Approved by Parliament.

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THESE falsehoods, so frequently and so unblushingly put forward, operated not only to keep alive the flickering flame of opposition throughout the nation, but served also to increase the obstinacy of the allies, and induce them to place more dependence upon their friends in England. Reduced to contend single-handed with the desire which England now manifested for peace, their opposition must soon have given way; but, seconded and encouraged by a party, who proved themselves so numerous and so powerful that they could insult and libel the ministers with impunity, they were encouraged to hold out, in expectation of the catastrophe which the Whigs daily assured them was at hand. Their assurances gave them to hope that each succeeding day would bring intelligence that the ministers were discarded, and that the Whigs, now lords of the ascendant, were ready to lead them again to conquest.

It was probably the influence of the Whig papers

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in nourishing these hopes, that induced Bolingbroke to attempt to circumscribe the liberty of the press. The possession of power is in itself a strong temptation to its exercise; and Bolingbroke, the object of attack as a minister and a party leader, forgot the feelings which had induced him, when establishing himself upon the ruin of the former ministry, to pursue their retreat with the bitterest censures, and to heap the most unmanly insult upon their patroness at court. With the writers he could employ upon his side, it might be supposed he would have little to fear from any literary contest; that argument might be safely opposed to abuse, and mere scurrility be despised and forgotten. But Bolingbroke was a minister: he was engaged in a multitude of occupations—some of these were of doubtful propriety, all were capable of attack. All the comments upon his conduct were severe, but some of them were probably true; and Bolingbroke, while he could retort the severity, must resent the truth.

So important were these libellous publications deemed, that the queen concludes one of her messages to parliament by representing the licentiousness of the press.* She is made to declare, that by seditious papers and factious rumours, designing men have been able to sink credit, and the innocent have suffered; and she recommends the house to find a remedy equal to the mischief. From the address which was voted in answer to this message, we

* Parl. Hist.

should infer that the queen's wrath was chiefly directed against some blasphemous publications which had lately appeared; an interpretation which her character would favour. But Swift, who was in the secret of all this transaction, and who was no unconcerned spectator, declares that Lord Bolingbroke, who advised the queen as to this part of her message, intended only to check the political libels which caused the ministry so much uneasiness.

In obedience to the queen's desire, and at the instance of her secretary, the parliament passed a bill, imposing a stamp upon pamphlets and periodical publications—the origin of the present newspaper stamp. At its origin the amount of this stamp was only a halfpenny; and it is curious to observe what an effect this trifling impost had upon the circulation of the most favourite papers. Many were entirely discontinued, and several of those which survived were generally united into one publication. The bill operated in a directly contrary manner to what the ministers had anticipated; for the opposition, who had more leisure, and perhaps more acrimony of feeling, were unanimous in the support of their cause. They employed a set of writers by subscription, who, says Swift,* were "well versed in all the topics of defamation, and had a style and genius levelled to the generality of readers." The adherents of ministers, who were by no means behind the opposition in their proficiency in the topics of defa-

* History of the Four last Years, &c.

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mation, were, it seems, not so strenuously supported; and the measure thus chiefly destroyed those whom it was Bolingbroke's interest to protect.

The insufficiency of his expedient soon became apparent to himself, and we find from his correspondence that Bolingbroke was often employed in prosecuting the printers of those papers which were most violent against him. Swift, who should have certainly had a fellow-feeling for these libellers, seems not only to have approved, but to have urged this severity. He complains much of the Flying Post and the Medley, two of the leading opposition journals of the period.* Their printers were often in prison, but were discharged upon bail; and the papers still appeared, with their satire rendered more pungent by the treatment the authors were smarting under.

The ill success of his prosecutions determined Bolingbroke to attempt an expedient which, if it had succeeded, would quickly have stopped the streams of vituperation which flowed from each party. Among the provisions he proposed was one, that every printed book, pamphlet, or paper which was published should bear the writer's name and address: a requisition which must have at once driven from the field of controversy all those men of eminence in the opposite parties who were bold so long as they could mingle masked in the fray, but who would

* See his correspondence at this time.

have shrunk from openly exposing their reputations and their persons in so equivocal a contest.

No one felt the inconvenience of the threatened measure more forcibly than the author of the "History of the Four last Years." His defence of anonymous writing drawn forth by this occasion is exceedingly amusing, when we consider the character of the works which *he* used to send forth, and the peculiar motives he usually had for concealment. "Besides the objection to this clause," he says, "from the practice of pious men, who, in publishing excellent writings for the service of religion, have chosen, out of an humble christian spirit, to conceal their names; it is certain that all persons of true genius or knowledge have an invincible modesty and suspicion of themselves upon their first sending their thoughts into the world; and that those who are dull or superficial, void of all taste and judgment, have dispositions directly contrary: so that if this clause had made part of a law, there would have been an end, in all likelihood, of any valuable production for the future, either in wit or learning; and that insufferable race of stupid people, who are now every day loading the press, would then reign alone—in time destroy our very first principles of reason, and introduce barbarity amongst us, which is already kept out with so much difficulty by so few hands."

This bill, which so powerfully excited the dean's fears for the safety of libellers and the interests of

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religion and learning, met with such opposition from both parties, that it was suffered to drop in the commons; and the idea of farther fettering the press was abandoned as impracticable. The attempt failed, but the purpose had been entertained; and, considering the part which St. John had already taken in the dirt-throwing contests which were then in vogue, and the approbation and assistance he was still affording to his satellites in the same practice, his attempt argues rather a distrust of the intrinsic defensiveness of many of the points attacked, than a dislike of the licentiousness which himself had indulged.

But these attacks, although embarrassing to him as a minister, were too frequent and too unfounded to afford any great personal uneasiness to Bolingbroke. There was another circumstance which happened at this time that caused him much more annoyance. Several deaths that had lately occurred in the peerage, among which was that of the Earl of Godolphin, had placed some of the ribands of the garter at the queen's disposal. They were now given away, and Oxford obtained one for himself. Bolingbroke was not less desirous to obtain than he was assiduous to merit honourable distinction, and he too expected that his late services would be rewarded. But the jealousy of the lord treasurer again interposed, and Bolingbroke considered he had endured a new affront. This was an addition to the reasons he already had for renouncing the friend-

ship of his early companion in the path of ambition; and he determined within himself that one or both must fall.

But before leisure could be obtained for a struggle with so powerful a rival, the great work which now absorbed all his attention must be despatched; and before his party engaged in a contest among themselves, their ascendency over the common enemy must be rendered complete. The conclusion of a peace was looked upon as the event which was to establish the power of the Tories upon an impregnable basis: that once attained, and sanctioned by the approbation of the nation, and all their difficulties would be conquered, all the topics of their enemies' eloquence would be taken away. Bolingbroke trusted to his own powers to bring about this event, and to the favour of his sovereign to shield him when he had accomplished it.

The queen had some time before submitted to her parliament a statement of the concessions she could hope to obtain from France, and stated that they were such as would in some degree indemnify her subjects for the sacrifices they had made during the long period that this sanguinary and expensive war had raged. These conditions had been approved by both houses, but not without violent debates in the lords; and the queen was thanked for her great condescension in making the communication, and for her conduct throughout the negotiations. The support of the parliament being thus ensured, every

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effort had since been used to expedite the conclusion of this important work. At length the exertions of the secretary were crowned with success. When the first burst of their enthusiasm had subsided, the States began to reflect upon the prospect they had before them. They discovered how little able they were to resist an enemy who had sustained an equal contest with them when supported by a power which had brought into the field thrice the number of men they could bring together with their utmost exertions. The arrogance of the French increased in proportion as the obstinacy of the States left them slighter claims upon the support of England. England, however, still proffered them her aid; and a few reverses which the Dutch sustained made them now eager to profit by it. The queen promised to insist upon France ceding to them the city of Tournay;* and several other advantages offered them, which they had no hope of obtaining by a separate peace, induced them to come into the queen's measures.

Many disputes yet occurred, and long discussions were still to be endured; but at length the terms of the different treaties were definitively settled. By the stipulations of that between England and France, Louis bound himself to acknowledge Anne's title,

* The ministers had originally intended that this city should be restored to France, and nothing but the perseverance of the Dutch preserved it. Their conduct upon this point formed the most important article in the impeachments which were afterwards brought against them.

which he had never yet formally recognised, and to assent to the line of succession which had been established by the nation. The fortifications of Dunkirk, upon which he had bestowed so much attention and expense, were to be destroyed within a limited period. The cession of Hudson's Bay and St. Christopher's, which had been insisted upon by England, was granted; and Newfoundland was added, with a reservation to the French of a settlement at Cape Breton, and a right to dry their fish upon the coast of the island.

For the allies, England obtained the best terms she could. The King of Portugal had refused to treat, until an actual invasion had shown him how impotent he was when deprived of the aid of his chief ally: he then yielded, and had no cause to complain of the conditions which were obtained for him.

The emperor refused to become a party to the general accommodation; but it was stipulated in his behalf that the possession of Naples, Milan, and the Spanish Netherlands, should be reserved to him.

The influence of England had been powerfully exerted to reward the fidelity of the Duke of Savoy: policy also concurred with the partiality of the queen for so near a relative. The island of Sicily was added to his dominions, and the title of king rendered his dignity equal to his extended territory.

The Elector of Bavaria, who had suffered as the ally of France, was indemnified with the island of

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Sardinia; and to him also was assigned a place among the crowned heads of Europe.

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The King of Prussia had suffered but little diminution of territory from the concessions required of him; the possession of Upper Gueldre was assigned to him as a sufficient equivalent.

The barrier, which was so prime an object with the Dutch, was settled to their advantage, and even to their satisfaction. The genius of Marlborough had put them in possession of many of the most important posts in Flanders; and the cities now yielded rendered their frontier towards France secure from aggression. For the necessity of restoring Lisle and its dependencies, they might chiefly accuse their own obstinacy; but the cession of Charleroy, Luxemburg, Newport, Namur, and Ypres, tended to reconcile them to the loss.

In estimating the advantages of peace, England had looked chiefly to the treaty of commerce; but the terms yielded by France were not so favourable as the nation expected. It was mutually agreed that the two countries should, in their commercial relations, be placed on the same footing with regard to each other as the nation which was now the most favoured by either; that no higher imposts should be laid upon the merchandise of France and England in each other's ports, than the lowest sum which was paid for the same species of merchandise by any other nation. Since the infraction of a commercial treaty induces rather a war of prohibitions and

duties than of arms, its final arrangement was not a necessary preliminary to the peace. Commissioners were appointed to meet at London to settle the details, and to determine with exactness the principles upon which commerce was to be carried on between the two countries.

More important advantages accrued to England from the treaty with Spain. The Spanish succession had been the origin of the war, and England thought she had reason to seek from that country some indemnity for the losses she had sustained by it. The expulsion of Philip had been abandoned, but only upon the condition that he should grant many of the concessions which the Archduke Charles had freely promised. In return for his recognition as King of Spain, Philip solemnly renounced all title to the throne of France,—a renunciation which was ratified in the most solemn manner by the council of the nation. Gibraltar and Minorca were ceded to England; and the title of the Duke of Savoy to Sicily acknowledged. The assiento treaty, which had been so firmly demanded by the English and so eagerly disputed by the Dutch, was secured to England for thirty years. The stipulation of this long-disputed article was, that a company chartered by the English government should enjoy the exclusive privilege of importing every year, for thirty years, four thousand eight hundred slaves from Africa to the West Indies; and that upon each slave a moderate fixed duty should be paid to the Spanish government. Thus

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did England, with infinite pains, and to the envy of all other nations, particularly the Dutch, who were terribly enraged at being excluded from this honourable traffic, acquire the exclusive privilege of carrying slavery and misery into a new world. She has since, indeed, nobly redeemed the crime of which she was then guilty; and as she was one of the first to import, so she has been the very first to abolish slavery in that quarter of the globe.

While each succeeding article of these treaties had been disputed and conceded, parliament had been continually prorogued, in order to avoid the necessity of calling for war-supplies, and to deprive the Whigs of the power which their union in the house would give them to interrupt the negotiations.

A.D. 1713. At length, in the middle of March, a courier from France brought the treaties of peace and commerce between France and England to Utrecht, with the plan of a general peace, which had been settled there by the Duke of Shrewsbury and the French minister De Torcy.* The duke had also received the renunciation of Philip of Spain, and had witnessed the registration of renunciations of all claim to Spain by the Dukes of Berry and Orleans. These renunciations, without which no final step could be taken, were now also arrived. All things being thus ready for putting a period to this great and difficult work, the lord privy seal and the Earl of Strafford gave notice to the ministers of the several

* De Torcy's Memoirs.

allies, that on the 31st of March they would be prepared to sign a treaty of peace and commerce between their mistress and the most christian king; and they hoped the allies would be prepared at the same time to follow their example in the accommodation of all their points of difference.

That day being arrived, the Bishop of Bristol and Earl Strafford, according to the instructions they had received from their court, assumed the characters of ambassadors. They delivered to the French ministers a memorial on behalf of the French protestants, and received from them a declaration that the Pretender was no longer in the French territory.

About two o'clock in the afternoon the representatives of the negotiating courts met at the bishop's hotel, and there the long-protracted work was accomplished. The treaties between England and France were immediately executed, and the Duke of Savoy's minister signed about an hour after. The assembly thence adjourned to the Earl of Strafford's to dinner. About nine at night the peace was executed by the ministers for Portugal; by those of Prussia at eleven; and, still preserving their characteristic procrastination, when it was near midnight by the States. The ratifications were soon afterwards exchanged, and on the 5th of May the peace was proclaimed, amid the rejoicings of the populace.

Such was the conclusion of Bolingbroke's celebrated work. The Spanish treaty was not indeed yet signed, because, as Philip was not yet recognised by

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any of the allied powers, he had no minister at the conferences; but as he had treated through the French, every point of the treaty was arranged, and its signature was only delayed until his recognition was formally made, and his ambassador named and received.

The parliament, which had been so often prorogued in expectation of this event, was now opened, and the queen, after telling them that her great object was at length accomplished, left the defence of the kingdom in their hands. "Make yourselves safe," she said, "and I shall be satisfied: next to the protection of Divine Providence, I depend upon the loyalty and affection of my people."*

Both houses joined in addresses of congratulation. The commons addressed the queen for copies of the treaties of commerce with France, and, when they were laid before them, appointed a day for their discussion. The treaty of commerce was most severely animadverted upon. It was said that, in the commercial intercourse of the countries, the consumption of England had far exceeded that of France, and high protecting duties had been established to rectify the inequality. In Portugal, on the contrary, the balance of trade was greatly in our favour; and in return for our productions, we not only imported wines and merchandise, but also large quantities of specie. By the new treaty, it was contended, the productions of France would be

* Parl. Hist.

consumed, but the profitable commerce with Portugal destroyed. The artificers who were engaged in the trades which the high protecting duties had fostered, would now, said the Whigs, be ruined; and beggary and wretchedness must be diffused throughout the kingdom, in order to meet the terms of an implacable enemy. More general topics of censure were introduced into the debate. The suspension of arms, the eager anxiety for peace, the desertion of the allies, were censured as the fatal causes of disgrace and disaster. The gathered indignation of the whole opposition was poured forth upon the negotiations and their authors; but in vain. The house decided in favour of the treaty by a great majority, and a bill was brought in to enable the queen to carry its provisions into execution. This bill however was not passed. It met with great opposition from the trading portion of the community, who universally detested it, as destructive to their interests. It called forth also remonstrances upon the part of Portugal, which kingdom threatened reprisals by an interdict upon our woollen exports.

The commons did not intend this rejection of the bill as a censure upon the treaty: on the contrary, they voted an address of thanks to the queen for the great care she had manifested for the honour and safety of her kingdom in respect to the peace, and the excellent footing upon which she had placed her subjects with regard to trade.*

* Parl. Hist.

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The queen and her ministers understood this address as an entire approval of the treaty; and her answer was warmly expressive of her satisfaction, not only that the war which had continued during the whole of her reign was at last concluded, but that the manner of its conclusion had satisfied her people.

Whether the satisfaction which had been expressed was warranted by the advantages which had been gained, it is not for us now to inquire. It was necessary thus far to notice the progress of the negotiations, because the history of the treaty of Utrecht forms a great portion of that of St. John. It was a work of magnitude and importance sufficient to give fame to the man who singly undertook and accomplished it, however false his views—however reprehensible his conduct. If successful in so great an undertaking, his fame will be commensurate with the magnitude of the achievement, and the extent of the benefits conferred: if unsuccessful, his failure was on too large a theatre, and its effects must have been too disastrous, to allow his attempt to be unknown, or his name forgotten.

His claim to praise, or his liability to censure, it will be our business to determine when the course of our history calls upon us to examine the charges which this treaty originated against him. That he at least felt no suspicion that his management had been incompetent or reprehensible, his public avowal at the time, and his writings afterwards, testify. In

the house of commons, while the treaty was yet pending, he declared that he had acted throughout for the good and advantage of Great Britain; and whatever censure he might undergo for it, the bare satisfaction of having acted in that view, would be a sufficient recompense and comfort to him during the remainder of his life. When adversity might have taught him to look back with more impartial attention to the cause which produced it, Bolingbroke still gloried in the part he had borne in this transaction. He always said that he could never review that great event, passed as it then was, without a secret emotion of mind, when he compared the vastness of the undertaking, and the importance of success, with the means employed to bring it about and those which were employed to traverse it. He declared that the importance of succeeding in the work of the peace was equally great to Europe, to his country, to his party, and to himself,—to the present age, and to future generations; but the means employed to bring it about were in no degree proportionable. A few men, some of whom had never been concerned in business of that kind before, and most of whom put their hands for a long time to it faintly and timorously, were the instruments of it. The minister who was at their head, he then declared, showed himself every day incapable of that attention, that method, that comprehension of different matters, which the first post in such a government as that of

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Britain requires even in quiet times. By his credit with the queen he was the spring of motion to the ministry; and by his rank in the state his concurrence was necessary to everything that was done: yet we are told, when business was most pressing he was sometimes asleep, sometimes at play. He neglected the thread of the transactions, which was therefore necessarily held by other hands; and when he did negotiate, as he did by fits and starts, he chose little tools, petty intrigue, and indirect ways, which rendered his occasional activity as hurtful as his habitual indolence.*

Now that the object of every effort of the ministry was accomplished, and the peace which the nation had called for had been effected;—now that that peace had received the sanction of the houses of parliament, and the nation was about to return to its usual peace establishment; it was expected that the men who had guided the vessel through the storm would be allowed peaceful possession of the helm when the danger was past. Far different was the result. In parliament the ministry were supported by a majority, and the opposition of the Whigs was rather noisy than dangerous; but nothing could equal the intemperance with which they attacked every article of the treaty out of doors. Making every allowance for its errors, we must still regard the hyperbolical strain of denunciation which was used to decry it as ludicrously inappropriate to

* Letter to Sir William Windham.

the subject or the occasion. The extremities to which the most violent of the party proceeded may be imagined from the terms in which one of the most moderate has expressed himself. When we see a prelate of the church* seriously prophesying from this disastrous treaty the downfal of the church, the extinction of liberty, destruction to the protestant succession, and a renewal of popish fires in Smithfield; and when we find him boastingly recording his prophecy long after he had witnessed its failure,—we can conjecture what must have been the expressions of those who had all that prelate's hostility to the Tories, but no sanctity of character to restrain the outburst of their indignation—no reputation for prudence to be maintained at the expense of controlling their passionate feeling.

* Bishop Burnet.

CHAPTER XIV.

Divisions in the Cabinet.—Secession of the Whimsical Tories.—Fear of the Pretender.—Tactics of the Opposition.—The Schism Bill.

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It was not only the hostility of the two great leaders of the ministry which now embarrassed the administration; nor was it the violent attacks of its open enemies which threatened its sudden overthrow. Directly the peace was concluded, it appeared as though this alone had been the purpose for which the ministry had been constituted. From their conduct, it might have been supposed that the business of the negotiations was the only bond which connected them together: that work once accomplished, and the restraining power withdrawn, the heterogeneous mass at once resolved itself into its constituent elements. Those Whigs who had joined the ministry at its commencement now began to waver, and showed themselves ready, upon the first favourable opportunity, to desert to their old associates. Like prudent politicians, they had shared in all the prosperity of the minister—they had no wish but to escape any participation in his adversity.

The Whigs were not the only deserters from the

ranks of the ministry: there was a party among the Tories, who, sharing in their anxiety for the security of the protestant succession, and also perhaps seeking to secure themselves in power when those limitations should take effect, maintained a close correspondence with the Elector of Hanover, and were in a great measure guided in their conduct by his sentiments. They were not long in perceiving that their interest lay in deserting their associates, whom the intrigues of the Whigs had completely succeeded in rendering odious at the electoral court.

The elector had become a convert to the erroneous opinion that was extensively diffused throughout the nation, that the ministers, and especially Bolingbroke, were diligently engaged in bringing about a restoration. Every circumstance which was by any means to be wrested to favour this conclusion was eagerly employed for the purpose; and the charge was so often repeated, that its truth at length began to be considered as admitted. A measure which was taken to quiet the apprehensions now so loudly avowed, from the unskilful manner in which it was advanced, and the tact with which it was received by the Whigs, produced quite the contrary effect, and gave yet more force and credence to the accusation. The lord treasurer moved for leave to bring in a bill for the farther security of the protestant succession, with a provision that it should be deemed high treason to bring any foreign troops into this kingdom.

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This may have been a measure taken by Oxford in accordance with his usual trimming policy, and with the hope that each party would consider it a concession made to them alone. But the Whigs were more quicksighted. The lords immediately perceived that the penalties, apparently designed against the adherents of the Pretender, might with the greatest facility be enforced against the protectors of the right of the house of Hanover, should it be necessary, upon the death of the queen, for the elector to assert his title with arms.

The Earl of Nottingham, who since his desertion had been furious in his opposition, represented that such a bill might be turned against the guarantees of the protestant succession, and weaken that happy settlement, for the security of which the measure was pretended to be framed. Lord Bolingbroke explained that the earl intended to confine his provision to such foreign troops as might be brought in by the Pretender or his adherents. It was in vain that Oxford declared that such only was his meaning: the suspicion of the house was awakened. He was answered, that in that case the bill was unnecessary, since such troops were already, if foreigners, open enemies; if natives, rebels and traitors. The debate was abruptly terminated by the Earl of Anglesea, who took an objection to the proceeding upon a point of form. Oxford had moved for leave to bring in this bill, and as, by the rules of the upper house, no such leave is necessary, he sug-

gested that the present proceeding was irregular, and it would be time to debate the bill when it was before them. Upon this the motion was dropped, and it was never resumed: nor did it pass off without occasioning many speculations, both in parliament and throughout the kingdom. A.D. 1713.

Another foundation for this charge against ministers was an attempt which Bolingbroke was said to be making to remodel the army. Now that the enemies of the ministry were becoming so formidable, it was deemed necessary to use harsher measures towards their adherents than had hitherto been adopted, in order if possible to discourage their friends, and to reward and animate their own. In pursuance of this resolve, the Duke of Argyle was dismissed from his employments, and the Earl of Stair was deprived of his regiment: several other officers at the same time received an intimation that they must sell their commissions.

It was assiduously reported, that all these dismissals were occasioned by a refusal upon the part of those who were removed to join in Bolingbroke's designs to bring over the Pretender; and it was added, that many other officers had been privately interrogated whether they would serve the queen without asking questions,* and that those who had refused to give such a pledge were to be immediately turned out of their posts.

These presumed intentions upon the part of the

* Boyer's Political State.

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government called forth proof of the determination of the people to preserve the protestant succession. The Whigs who remained in the army were cautiously but actively imbuing the corps which they commanded with a hatred of the Pretender, and an affection for the house of Hanover. These men communicated with each other, and held themselves ready to act upon the first exigency. A body of French refugees who were then in the kingdom were united in the same cause, and their aid was much relied upon in case of a collision: measures had also been taken by the members of the Kit-Cat Club, that, upon the first alarm, a military officer with whom they were in correspondence, should seize the Tower, and arrest and confine there all the most considerable persons who were suspected of favouring the Pretender's cause.

With this disposition for the contest, the Whigs waited in expectation of some decisive step; and had any design existed to bring about a restoration, the people alone would have been found sufficiently prepared to render it abortive.* No such design did exist; but of this the Elector of Hanover was as ignorant as those in England, who bound themselves to resist a scheme which was only the phantom of their own imaginations. It is not strange, therefore, that the whole of his interest was thrown into the scale against the ministers; and it is natural

* I shall have occasion to recur to this subject.

that the precarious nature of the queen's health should render that interest exceedingly powerful.*

When it became known that the ministers were divided among themselves—that the queen's life, upon whom alone they depended, was exceedingly precarious—and that they had no favour to expect from the elector, every day discovered new vacancies in their ranks. Their opponents were proportionably encouraged, and redoubled their attacks. They were severely censured for their conduct with regard to the Catalans,—a people whom they had excited to provoke the indignation of their sovereign, in order to produce a diversion in their favour during the war; who had served them devotedly, and who, when their services were no longer required, had been abandoned without scruple. That Bolingbroke had but little compunction for his conduct, or sympathy for their misfortunes, appears from many parts of his correspondence: tame and fruitless memo-

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* The Tories had been strangely inattentive to the court of Hanover. They seem to have thought that it was rather the part of the elector to pay court to them, than theirs to conciliate their future sovereign. In their vain confidence, they did not scruple to disgust Robothen, the elector's private secretary; and the electoral court was abandoned entirely to the Whigs. They did not fail to improve their advantage: Robothen and Bothenar were devoted to their interests, and as their master was entirely ruled by his dependants, their influence was decisive. Bolingbroke, from some passages in his correspondence, seems to have discovered his error, but not until it was too late to remedy it.

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rials were all he was disposed to undertake in their behalf.

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The want of perseverance in persecuting the Pretender was another subject of attack. The violence with which the Whigs urged forward the most disgraceful attacks upon this person, was the worst part of their character as a party. The Earl of Wharton proposed in the lords to offer a reward for his apprehension either alive or dead, or, in other words, a reward for his assassination;—a disgraceful proposition, which would have been rejected with indignation by a horde of savages, but which was listened to with complacency by no inconsiderable portion of the peers of England.* They had since presented several addresses to induce the queen to insist upon his expulsion from the territories of her allies, and sometimes received from her a reprimand instead of a promise of compliance. They now resolved upon an address to know what steps had been taken to remove the Pretender from Lorraine, whither he had retired upon his expulsion from France; and desired the queen to issue a proclamation, promising a reward for his apprehension in case he should land in England. The queen replied, that it would be a real strengthening to the succession of the house of Hanover, as well as a support to her

* It was carried in the first instance; and when the committee reported it, the debate was renewed, and this disgraceful clause was rejected by a majority of ten.—*Parl. Hist.* Mr. Coxe is not ashamed to attempt to justify this motion.

government, if an end were put to those groundless fears and jealousies which had been so industriously promoted. She saw no occasion for such a proclamation; but whenever she judged it necessary, she would order it to be issued. With regard to the other particulars of the address, she promised to give proper directions thereon.

The persevering hatred of the lords was not yet satisfied; their determination to hunt the unfortunate prince from every asylum, and to take from him every refuge, manifested such an unwarrantable bitterness, as to procure him to be considered an injured man by many who had little favour for his cause. Men naturally feel compassion for the misfortunes of those whose exalted stations have rendered their reverses more conspicuous and severe; and the ungenerous animosity of the lords obtained for the Pretender a sympathy which neither his disposition nor his talent could have ever gained or justified. They were dissatisfied with the answer of the queen to their address, and prepared another, which, however, was not presented.

Among the numerous attacks made upon ministers by the indefatigable Earl of Wharton, was a motion recording it as the opinion of the house that the protestant succession was in danger from the present administration. The debates upon this question discovered the weakness of ministers and the treachery of their supporters. The Archbishop of York and the Earl of Anglesea, who had hitherto supported them,

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now joined the Whigs; and the earl delivered himself with all the zeal of a new convert. He pretended a sudden conviction from the arguments which had been advanced by the opposition, and which, in fact, were but a repetition of what had been nightly reiterated during the whole progress of the transactions. He owned his assent to the acts which were most vehemently censured, and asked pardon of his God and his country for the error he had committed. "The honour of his sovereign," he said, "and the good of his country, were the motives of his conduct; but should he have been deceived and misled, he would dare pursue an evil minister from the queen's closet to the Tower, and from the Tower to the scaffold." A resolution which he had doubtless taken upon discovering by experience with what honourable intentions such fatal errors may be committed. But this conscientious and repentant nobleman was afterwards reclaimed to Toryism by the promise of a more lucrative appointment.

The lord treasurer was accused of regularly subsidizing the Highland chiefs, who were notoriously the most ill-affected to the house of Hanover of all the queen's subjects. He, however, entirely rebutted the charge, by proving that the practice had been commenced by King William, and that he had considerably reduced the amount remitted to them.

Another scheme to embarrass ministers was the

persuading Baron Schultz to demand a writ for the electoral prince, that he might sit in the house of peers as Duke of Cambridge, and to intimate that he intended to reside in England. The chancellor, to whom this request was first communicated, was astonished at the proposal; but, upon conferring with the council, thought fit to comply. The queen, however, deeply resented the application as an affront to her; and she wrote a letter to the Princess Sophia to prevent the execution of any such design. That the presence of a person who was eagerly expecting her death in order to secure her throne must have been disagreeable to Anne, is very natural; but it was no less natural, that when a large and active party existed ready to take advantage of any fortunate contingency to defeat their title, the elector and his adherents should be anxious to have an authoritative agent upon the spot ready to oppose their attempts. The queen also wrote to the prince and the elector upon the subject; and the design, which had never been approved or even known by him, was abandoned. These letters were afterwards published; a liberty which the queen resented so highly, that she prosecuted the printer, and forbade the Hanoverian minister her court.

Such were the open attacks which were daily made upon the ministry,—attacks enforced by all the power of eloquence, and prosecuted with all the zeal which patriotism and party spirit can

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together inspire. But amid the open assaults of enemies and the desertion of friends, the queen yet stood firmly attached to the cause of her ministers: while she survived they were still safe, and could they have established unanimity among themselves, they might yet have made their peace with the house of Hanover. The dangerous position in which they stood in the event of the queen's death was well understood by Bolingbroke, who betrays an irresolution upon this point which was inconsistent with his usual character. "I cannot help adding," he writes to a relation of the lord treasurer, "that we ought to be better or worse with the court of Hanover than we are."* He saw the danger to be dreaded from the succession of the elector and the supremacy of the Whigs; but he saw no means to obviate that danger but by declaring openly for the Pretender and repealing the act of succession. We have before asserted that no fixed design for bringing about this event was ever entertained by the ministry; but we are far from declaring that the Tories, threatened by the violence of the Whigs and the undisguised hostility of the lawful successor to the crown, did not many of them ardently wish for a restoration, provided it could be accomplished upon terms which would secure the liberty and constitution of the country. Every person, however, who held any correspondence with the Pretender, soon discovered that, in the

* Letter to Mr. Harley, of July 23, 1712. Bol. Corr.

words of Sir W. Windham, he was an "impracticable man:" he had all the bigotry and obstinacy, and not a little of the incompetence, which characterized his family. Bolingbroke well knew that the restoration, which would confirm his own power, must ruin his country.

Circumstances occurred which showed that the dissolution of the Harley administration was speedily and inevitably approaching. The members of it were unable to act in concert even in their own defence. The fire which had been long smouldering in the cabinet, had now burst forth in flame. Harley and St. John, from secret rivals, had become open and violent enemies. Every meeting of the council was a scene of tumult and confusion. The queen vainly interposed to put an end to a contest which nothing but the fall of one could determine. Lady Masham, who determined the queen in everything, openly declared against the treasurer: she told him that he had never done the queen any service, nor was he capable of doing any; and was as assiduous to persuade the queen to discard him, as she had once been to raise him in her estimation.*

But Anne had still a high opinion of her minister's ability; and though her friendship for him had been cooled by the arts of those around her, her confidence in him remained. She had seen many of his schemes succeed which others had opposed as impracticable;

* Letter of Lewis to Swift,—Swift's Letters.

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she had seen others fail which they had advised and he had disapproved. She felt that disease was rapidly gaining upon her—that she had not long to live; and she was averse to disturbing the remainder of her life with the cabals of contending parties. The measures of Oxford were usually moderate and conciliatory, and likely to accord with the wishes of a timorous and declining woman. These considerations induced her to support her minister for some time in the high office he held: but although his nominal superiority remained, his real authority was gone. It is said, that it was in the debate upon the question, whether the queen should permit the Duke of Cambridge to take his seat in the lords, that the influence of Bolingbroke was first established. Oxford wished to allow it as a boon which might convince the house of Hanover of the falsehood of the charges that had been made against the ministers. This sentiment, so disagreeable to the queen, Bolingbroke opposed; and declared, that after filling all the offices with Tories, they need be under no apprehension from the resentment of the elector, who would then have too much occasion for their services to resent any injuries he might fancy he had received. His opinion prevailed; and his conduct upon this occasion added not a little to his influence with the queen.

Having thus gained an ascendency in the council, he determined upon another scheme, which he hoped

must either deprive his rival of the benefit of the intrigues he was carrying on with the dissenters, or entirely ruin him with the queen. Anne, although owing her crown to the principles of the revolution, had been deeply imbued, by her education, with sentiments not altogether favourable to religious liberty. Her affection for the church of England was ardent and sincere; but, as is frequently the case in weak minds, it was too apt to show itself in intolerance. Any measure, professing as its object the security of the church, was certain of her approval; and Bolingbroke, before the session closed, determined to turn this weakness to his own advantage. He laid before her a bill, having as its title, "An Act to prevent the growth of Schism, and for the better security of the Church of England as by law established." A.D. 1713.

This bill pressed with great severity upon the dissenters, and was of course, by them and their patrons the Whigs, violently opposed. Walpole, Hampden, and others of that party, nobly vindicated the principle of religious tolerance: Sir Peter King declared that it looked more like a decree of Julian the Apostate than a law enacted by a protestant parliament, since it tended to raise as great a persecution against our protestant brethren as either the primitive christians ever suffered from the heathen emperors, or protestants from popery and the inquisition. The supporters of the bill were more violent against the dissenters than they had been against

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those who were contriving their persecution. One of them declared that the dissenters were equally dangerous to church and state; that if members were so opposed to this bill, he would readily consent that it should drop, but only upon the condition that another should be brought in to incapacitate them either to sit in that house, or to vote in elections for members of parliament.

It was remarked that among the most strenuous advocates of this bill in the lower house was one Collier, whose presence was looked upon as equally a disgrace to the house, and to Bolingbroke, who had placed him there. This man, who had been an attorney of very equivocal character, obtained by his obtruding impudence the acquaintance, and at length the intimacy, of Lord Bolingbroke; who, it is said, from a buffoon and an obsequious companion of his nocturnal debauches, thought fit to advance him to a higher station.* By the Duke of Beaufort's interest he was brought into the house of commons, although those whom his ribaldry annoyed asserted that he had not 30*l.* a year of property. The companions of a debauchee are not often very carefully selected; but if Bolingbroke held any other intercourse with Collier, it was for some more pertinent qualities than his excellence as a

* A tract called "The Life and History of Lord Bolingbroke," published in 1754, and written with all the violence of party enmity.

buffoon. At this time he was much in need of unscrupulous supporters; and the notice which the other party took of the zeal of this man, showed that he had at least some of the qualities which policy would have led his patron to approve.

The bill passed the commons with a rapidity which proved that Bolingbroke's influence there was still paramount; but it was in the lords that he hoped to derive benefit from its discussion. Upon introducing it, he said "it was a bill of the last importance, since it concerned the security of the church of England, the best and firmest support of the monarchy; both which all good men, and in particular that august assembly, who derived their lustre from and were nearest the throne, ought to have most at heart." *

In the speeches which were delivered in opposition to this measure, many of the Whigs ably defended the dissenters against their political adversary, and enforced their party's principles. The Earl of Wharton said he was agreeably surprised to see that some men of pleasure were on a sudden become so religious as to set up for patrons of the church; but he could not but wonder that persons who had been educated at dissenting academies,† whom he

* Parliamentary History.

† We have already noticed Bolingbroke's education among the presbyterians. Harley was for many years a pupil in a school kept by a presbyterian: this school was famous for the number of illustrious men which it sent forth.

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could point out, and whose tutors he could name, should appear the most forward in suppressing them. "This," he said, "was but an indifferent return for the benefit the public had received from those schools, which had sent forth those great men who had made so glorious a peace, and *treaties that executed themselves*;"—a boast which ministers had made during the discussions;—"who had obtained so great advantages for commerce; and who had paid the public debts without any charge to the nation. He could see no reason there was to suppress these academies, unless it were an apprehension that they should still produce greater geniuses, that should drown the merits and abilities of those great men. My lords," he continued, "to be serious, 'tis no less melancholy than surprising, that at a time when the court of France prosecutes the design they have long since laid to extirpate our holy religion, — when not only secret practices are used to impose a popish Pretender upon these realms, but men are publicly enlisted for his service;—it is melancholy and surprising, I say, that at that very time a bill should be brought in which cannot but tend to divide protestants, and consequently to weaken their interests and hasten their ruin. But there the wonder will cease, if we remember what madmen were the contrivers and promoters of this bill." Again his lordship remarked, "that both in the bill, and in the speeches of those who declared for it, several laws had been recited and mentioned,—but there was a

law that had not yet been mentioned. I expected," he added, turning to the bench of bishops, "that venerable bench would have put us in mind of it; but since they are pleased to be silent in this debate, I will myself tell them that it is the law, *to do unto all men as we would be done unto.*"

The Earl of Nottingham exclaimed against a measure which deprived parents of their natural right of educating their children, and concluded with a severe attack upon Swift, who had lately assailed his lordship with some very bitter lampoons.

All the efforts of the opposition were in vain: Bolingbroke was confident of a majority, and with unshrinking intolerance refused the insertion of a clause allowing the dissenters schools for the education of their own children. But his real object was for the present frustrated. The lord treasurer, whose declaration he had anxiously expected, refused to vote: he said, "that he had not yet considered of it; but when he had, he would vote according as it should appear to him to be to the good or detriment of his country."

He continued to pursue this undecided conduct. The presbyterians petitioned to be heard by counsel against the bill; and although their prayer was refused, upon division it appeared that many of Oxford's staunchest friends were in the minority: he himself, however, was not in the house. This reluctance to decide strengthened the suspicion of Bolingbroke's real intention, and intimated that the

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treasurer was aware of the danger that threatened him.

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The allusion which had been made by the Earl of Wharton in his speech upon this bill was not without foundation. The Jacobites were carrying on their projects in England with great zeal, but with little caution. An agent of the Pretender at Deal, acting under the formal authority of the Earl of Middleton, the Pretender's secretary of state, had lately been openly enlisting soldiers for his service. The vigilance of the Earl of Wharton first discovered this circumstance; and he did not fail to communicate his discoveries, and to charge the ministers with connivance at the practice. This charge was indignantly denied; and Bolingbroke's conduct upon the occasion was certainly not that of a man who was disposed to bring about a restoration. Upon ascertaining the truth of the intelligence, he immediately issued a proclamation, offering 5000*l.* reward to any person who should apprehend the Pretender upon his landing in any part of Great Britain. He also brought in a bill to put an effectual stop in future to such attempts as those which now caused so much dismay. By this he proposed to declare it to be high treason for any person to enlist, or for any one to engage others, for the service of the Pretender;—a measure which certainly no friend to that prince would ever have proposed, and which was too efficacious in its effects to have been advanced as a blind to disguise ulterior designs.

These active steps seem to have reassured the parliament, and rendered them more confident in the honesty of the queen's intentions. Votes of thanks to her for the proclamation were carried in both houses; and the commons declared that they would cheerfully grant her majesty the means of increasing the reward to 100,000*l.*

Lord Bolingbroke's bill was received with great favour; and in order to make it more comprehensive, its penalties were extended to all who should engage in the service of any foreign prince without the consent of the queen, signified under her sign manual. These measures taken, the panic which the alarm sounded by the Earl of Wharton had excited passed away, and the Whigs returned again to their more ordinary topics of opposition.

There was yet one tie which restrained the cabinet from formally declaring against each other out of the council-chamber: it was the sense of a common danger. While any part of the late negotiations remained uncanvassed, the members of the present government were open to prosecution upon that ground; and every individual felt that the time was not far distant when the Whigs would want neither power nor inclination to pursue their advantages. The Spanish treaty—which, as was before observed, was not executed at the conferences at Utrecht, because the King of Spain had not yet been acknowledged—was still to be discussed in parliament; and ministers were anxious to have the sanction of the houses to

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this important measure before the prorogation took place.

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In the house of lords the debate upon this subject was, as usual, very violent; and the ministers had sufficient employment in wiping off the mud with which the scavenger assailed them.* Since the treaty had been signed, several explanatory articles had been agreed to at a conference at Madrid, where some details not mentioned in the treaty had been determined. These additional articles, which Bolingbroke, acting under the advice of one Moore, whom he supposed to be well versed in the commercial interests of the country, persuaded the queen to ratify, turned out to be highly injurious to our trade. Evidence to this effect was given at the bar of the house of lords; and, acting upon this evidence, they addressed the queen for copies of all papers connected with these articles, and for the names of the parties who had advised her majesty to ratify them. The latter part of this address conveyed a strange request, and would suggest a suspicion that the doctrine of the entire responsibility of the ostensible ministers of the crown was hardly so well established and defined as it has since been.

The queen, however, refused to comply with their demand; but declared that she had assented to the ratification of the explanatory articles upon a con-

* This is the manner in which Bolingbroke generally speaks of the Earl of Wharton. —See the Bol. Corr.

viction that they were not hurtful to the commercial interests of her people. The house of lords was with difficulty induced to rest satisfied with this reply; and, in the commons, a more direct attack was made upon Moore, the adviser of the obnoxious provisions. But the interest of Bolingbroke was there too powerful to be withstood, and the delinquent escaped. He did not, however, avoid all the consequences of the odium he had incurred. The court of directors of the South Sea Company expelled him their body, of which he was a member, for some transactions connected with that company: he was declared incapable of again holding that office; but in degrading the agent, the Whigs were probably not sorry to discover a means of censuring his employer.

To appease these clamours, and to persuade the parliament to sanction the treaty, the queen determined upon a sacrifice which she had hoped would be unnecessary. In insisting upon the assiento contract, she had a view to her own comfort and independence, as well as to the increase of her country's commerce: she had therefore reserved one quarter of the proceeds of that trade to herself. This she now gave up, and received in return an address of thanks from the lords for her munificence. After some more debate the treaty was approved, and the task of Bolingbroke consummated.

CHAPTER XV.

Struggle between Oxford and Bolingbroke.—Swift's attempt to reconcile them.—Oxford's Letter to the Queen.—His Dismissal.

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EVERY common object being now obtained, nothing remained to retard the final struggle to eject the lord treasurer from the place, the power of which he had long ceased to wield, and the duties of which he had still longer ceased to perform. Each rival, in preparation for the event, had been secretly tampering with the Whigs, who looked on delighted spectators of the conflict. They knew their interest, however, too well to coalesce with enemies whom they soon expected to have at their mercy, and they affected a severe and stately reserve.

Oxford now experienced the usual consequence of timorous and crooked counsels: the Tories looked upon him as half a Whig, as in his heart he no doubt was; the Whigs saw in him only the successful rival who had ejected them from power, and who since, while amusing them with hollow professions, had sought in vain to betray those whom he wanted art enough to deceive. All the Tories who were at all to be depended upon, such as Lord

Harcourt, Sir William Windham, and Mr. Secretary Bromley, had attached themselves to Bolingbroke. Hope of accommodation there was none—that had been often unsuccessfully tried; at the commencement of the struggle, by Lady Masham, and even the queen herself, whom these harassing dissensions were hurrying towards the grave; and more lately by Swift, whose fortunes were linked with the Tories, and who foresaw in their enmities his own ruin. In expectation of their fall, he had just procured his deanery; a promotion with which, as it was in every respect disagreeable to him, he would never have been satisfied, had he entertained any hopes of his patrons remaining in office. Upon his return from taking possession of his preferment, he found their animosities had if possible increased; but he resolved to make an effort to bring about a reconciliation.

With this object, he contrived to bring them together at Lord Masham's; and having acquainted him and his lady with his purpose, they left him alone with the two rivals. Swift warmly expostulated with them; showed them the madness* of their conduct—the ruin they were bringing upon their friends, and the triumph they were preparing for

* Bolingbroke was not insensible of the truth of these observations: in a letter to Prior at this period, he bewails the confusion, and quotes the proverb, "Quos perdere Jupiter vult, prius dementat;" a sentence well exemplified in his own and his rival's fortunes.

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their enemies. He urged every topic he could suggest tending to induce them to sacrifice their private sentiments to the interest of their country—or, perhaps more properly, to the interest of their party. He hoped, by keeping them together, to revive the friendship which they once had felt; and he induced them to go to Windsor together. Thither he soon followed them; but he had the mortification to hear from Lord Bolingbroke that his scheme had failed, and he observed, with despair, that every hour lessened the chances of any accommodation.

He made one more attempt, and they again met at Lord Masham's. When he found his expostulations vain, he said that all was gone, and their friends must provide for their own safety. Oxford said that all would yet be well; but Bolingbroke whispered Swift that he was right.

Deserted by his friends, frowned upon by his mistress, and abandoned by his dependants, Oxford yet resolved to make one effort to regain the supremacy, and scorned to yield without a struggle. Marlborough's name was yet a tower of strength; if he could be gained, the falling treasurer might retire into the ranks of the Whigs, and return at their head prepared to chastise the insolence of his enemies. Marlborough was abroad, whither the intrigues of Oxford had driven him; but the latter was now as anxious for his return as he had before been desirous of his departure. He wrote to him, entreating in the most earnest manner his co-operation and

support. But the resentment of the Marlboroughs was too deep and well-founded to be extinguished by concessions prompted only by a sense of weakness. The duchess could not forget the arts by which she had been supplanted, and the disgrace in which she had been dismissed; and the duke is said to have vowed that he would never forget or forgive the injuries he had suffered from him.* Far from benefiting him, his attempt, when it became known to his rival, furnished him with a new topic of accusation to the queen. The return of the duke to England was a circumstance which she dreaded as much as the most timorous Tory in her ministry; and her prime minister now appeared to her in the character of a traitor to her interests and a spy of the house of Hanover.

Sensible that this state of things could not long continue, Oxford prepared to render to the queen such an account of his administration as might, when examined by the Whigs, whom he foresaw must be almost immediately in power, tend to throw all the odium of the obnoxious measures upon his colleagues, and obtain for himself the merit of every popular step. The caution which he habitually observed rendered this no difficult task; and he accomplished it in a letter to the queen, which he entitled, "A Brief Account of Public Affairs since August the 8th, 1710, to this present 8th of June, 1714; to which is added the State of Affairs Abroad as they

* Political State, vol. ii.

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relate to this Kingdom; with some humble proposals for securing the future tranquillity of her majesty's reign, and the safety of her kingdoms."

In this letter he gives an abstract of the history of the transactions of his four years of office. He states, that when he assumed the helm, he found the army in the field, and no money in the treasury: that the contractors had refused to renew their contracts, and the Bank had refused Godolphin any farther advances: the navy was eleven millions in debt, the civil list 600,000*l.*, and the yearly revenue nearly 130,000*l.* under the necessary expenditure.

He says that, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, he paid the army, provided funds for the ensuing year, and laid before the ensuing parliament a plan for discharging nine millions of the national debt. He dwells with great complacency upon this scheme, attributing to it the establishment of our credit abroad, and the readiness of France to enter into negotiations for peace. He traces to this also the origin of what he calls the envy and rage of his fellow-servants; and makes that charge of intentional peculation against St. John which has been before mentioned and refuted.

He disclaims all participation in the ill-fated expedition to the Canadas; and he thus relates the affair which cost him the friendship and support of Mrs. Masham:—"The 4th of June, 1711, three days after the treasurer was sworn, he was surprised with a demand of 28,036*l.* 5*s.* for arms and

merchandise said to be sent to Canada. When the treasurer scrupled this, Mr. Secretary St. John and Mr. Moor came to him with much passion upon this affair; and about a fortnight after the secretary of state signified the queen's positive pleasure to have that money paid; and accordingly her majesty signed a warrant, June 21; and the treasurer not being able then, with all his precaution, to discover farther light, the money was paid July the 4th.

"Since the return from that expedition, the secret is discovered, and the treasurer's suspicion justified; for the public was cheated of above 20,000*l.*

"One thing more is craved leave to be added: that the treasurer was forced to use all his skill and credit to keep the house of commons from examining this affair last parliament."

The acquiescence in this job is certainly a blot upon the reputation of Bolingbroke; but it can by no means be therefore admitted that he was probably guilty of the intention which Oxford charges him with, of appropriating a large sum of the public money to his own use. Living in the atmosphere of a corrupt court, and determined to gratify his ambition, Bolingbroke was inclined to venture upon acts which the timidity rather than the principle of Oxford would not allow him to engage in. Like many other and better ministers, he held a station in a government which exercised corruption as one of the means of its support; and habit soon inclined him, as it has them, to look with widely different

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feelings upon corruption applied to support their power, and that which is exerted only for the sordid purpose of personal avarice. This consideration is not advanced as an apology for Bolingbroke's conduct in this affair; it is only urged to prevent his condemnation upon the other charge, which was far baser in its nature, and much more destitute of plausibility or proof.

With regard to the credit the treasurer claims of having withdrawn the attention of parliament from the subject: if the assertion were true, it would only implicate him as a party to the transaction; and so the house of commons thought when they made it one of the articles of his impeachment. That the service was not very important, may be inferred from his answer to that article; which was, that although all the papers upon which he grounded his judgment were before the house, who had long been looking anxiously for some such charge to bring home against Bolingbroke, they had never thought such an accusation sustainable against him.

In his "Brief Account" the treasurer proceeds to say, that after this affair Mr. Secretary St. John thought fit to list a separate party for himself. To prevent this, Lord Rochester and the treasurer desired to have a meeting; and it was contrived that they should both dine at St. John's house. He remarks, that this was the last time St. John ever invited him to his house. At this dinner the Duke of Shrewsbury, Earl Powlet, and others, were pre-

sent; and Lord Rochester "took pains to calm the spirit of division and ambition." *

The attempt of Guiscard then intervened; and when he had recovered from his wound, he says, his hands were full of negotiating the peace in all courts abroad; and his duties were greatly increased by being obliged to conciliate the captious temper of Mr. Secretary, who was always quarrelling either with him, or Lady Masham, or Lord Dartmouth.

The falsehood of the statement he makes, that he conducted the negotiations in all the courts abroad, every document which passed and the testimony of every party to the treaties demonstrate. Like many persons who advance questionable propositions, he seems to think that repetition will increase its chance of credence. He therefore takes an opportunity of again insisting that the correspondence with all the courts concerned in the negotiations was in his own hand, and at his own charge; and he adds, what is as improbable as the other is certainly false, that very often he had the good luck to set right several mistakes, and to obtain some things very little expected. What these were he does not venture to tell us—a singular omission in a letter written solely to exhibit and magnify his services. That his dis-

* This statement, if it can be depended upon, (we shall presently see the queen's opinion of Oxford's veracity,) sufficiently refutes what Bolingbroke has declared in his letter to Sir William Windham, that he preserved his friendship for Harley inviolate until his disappointment with respect to his peerage.

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coveries were very numerous, his notorious inattention to business renders extremely unlikely; that his interference ever obtained any concession to England or her allies, no hint is given by any of the minute writers upon these treaties.

The quarrels and grudges of St. John with Lady Masham and himself are hardly to be urged as an accusation by a man who, upon losing her favour, could call the same lady "ten thousand bitches and kitchen-wenches."* St. John was then in the same situation in which Oxford afterwards found himself, — hated by the favourite, and therefore in ill odour with the queen. He had also the insolent superiority of Oxford himself to endure; who, leaving all the drudgery and the odium of business to him, monopolized every tittle of patronage. In 1711, he complains to one of his correspondents, that he has little in his power.† Even Mr. Hare, his under-secretary, for whom he interested himself very warmly, could obtain through his solicitation no more than a small place in the West Indies, and even that appointment was only during pleasure. While Oxford engrossed all the patronage of the court, the favour of the queen, and the rewards of the services of the ministry, it is not surprising that St. John should sometimes warmly expostulate, that to him was assigned only the conduct and odium of unpopular measures, and that his reward was the

* Lewis to Swift, July 17, 1714. † Bol. Corr. vol. i. p. 176.

opposition of the favourite and the dislike of his mistress.

The treasurer particularly dwells upon St. John's violence upon the occasion of his elevation to the peerage; and again, when the knighthood of the garter was given away from him. Did we not know that the expressions are those of a falling minister towards a successful rival, we should conceive from his picture of him that Bolingbroke was a dangerous madman—a firebrand which was kept from spreading conflagration throughout Europe only by the delicate management of the patient and long-suffering lord treasurer.

The most indefensible parts of the negotiations, particularly the French treaty of commerce, he denies all participation in; and declares that all was done contrary to his instructions, while he was confined by sickness.

That Oxford was hardly to be reproached for any of the positive measures of his administration, may be readily admitted: his crime was rather the neglect of the affairs of government, for which he was responsible. That he opposed the stipulations in the commercial treaties is hardly credible, when we consider that the chief cause of their defective and unfavourable character was the hurry with which they were despatched, in order that the ministers might be able to tell the parliament that peace had been concluded.

This is the substance of the treasurer's exculpatory

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letter to his mistress;—a letter which, whether written to shift the responsibility of the measures of his administration from himself to the secretary, and gain favour, or at least impunity, from the Whigs —or whether written to excite the gratitude of the queen now he could no longer count upon her favour, was equally ill adapted to his object. Anne could not fail to resent the accusations made against a man who now enjoyed her confidence, especially when his new ally, the Lady Masham, was at hand to declare them false. Sovereigns seldom care to be reminded of obligations to their subjects; and the Stuart blood which ran in the veins of Anne would occasionally betray her as kindred spirit to the haughty monarchs of that family. When she was told that many of his alleged services were imaginary, and knew that others were exaggerated, she was inclined to doubt the foundation of his claim to any, and to excuse her fickleness under the name of justice.*

From the Whigs this document received still less favour: it was made use of to furnish articles for his impeachment. Some of the admissions it contains are certainly indicative that in its composition his passion overcame his habitual caution; and its transmission to the queen had not a momentary effect in delaying the execution of the resolution she had formed for his dismissal.

* This letter is printed in the Report of the Secret Committee appointed to examine the negotiations of the Treaties of Utrecht.

Anne now no longer made any scruple to part with him, or any secret of her intention. She declared to all her servants, that the reasons of his dismissal were, that he neglected all business; that he was seldom to be understood; that when he did explain himself, she could not depend upon the truth of what he said; that he never came to her at the time she appointed; and lastly, that he behaved himself towards her with bad manners, indecency, and disrespect.* Oxford, in fact, had experienced the favour of the queen until he had been spoiled with indulgence; and he acted then, as most favourites have been found to act, with too little recollection of the tenure by which he held his fortune. But to this list of his transgressions many others are to be added which weighed more powerfully against him, although it would hardly have been politic to enumerate them. Among these are to be placed his opposition to Mrs. Masham in the abortive expedition to Canada; his remonstrating with the queen upon the occasion of her granting that lady a pension of 1500*l.* a year; and again, his allowing the queen's share in the assiento contract to be given up,—a scheme, in the profits of which the favourite expected largely to participate. Bolingbroke, with less scrupulous principle, or with less terror for coming investigations, had gratified his patroness in every instance, and thought no conces-

* Erasmus Lewis' letter to Swift. This Lewis was one of the most faithful of the earl's adherents.

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sion too great to secure her all-powerful friendship. His hour of triumph was, he thought, now come, and he did not attempt to conceal his feelings of exultation. On the 20th of July, the lord chancellor —who had no longer any occasion to complain of neglect on the part of Bolingbroke — was sent for to town, and was closeted with the queen the next day. Lady Masham was constant in her attendance upon her; and it was believed that at this council the fate of the dragon—as Oxford was nicknamed by the adherents of the ministry—would be settled.

It was anticipated, however, that his dismissal would be honourable; and that a dukedom and a pension of 5000*l.* a year would be bestowed, to reconcile him to the necessity of retirement. But the ministers were too much divided as to the persons to be appointed commissioners in his place, to be able to take from him his staff: the number was to be five; Bolingbroke and Sir W. Windham were of course to be two, but they could not decide upon the other three. Meanwhile, the conduct of the treasurer was singularly inconsistent: at one time he would rage, and threaten to burst the toils which surrounded him; at another, he and his rival were to be seen walking together, apparently upon terms of perfect friendship. The desertion of the chancellor particularly excited his indignation, and he repeatedly swore that he would be revenged upon him. The chancellor's conduct he might have expected from the neglect with which he had treated

him. Lady Masham had been connected with him by closer ties of friendship; yet, when she declared openly against him and bid him defiance to his face, he brooked the insult, remained and supped with her and Bolingbroke, and still continued to visit, cringe, and flatter.

This conduct, continued to the last moment, was probably intended to obtain for him favourable terms upon his dismissal. It is certain that at this time he had no hopes of regaining his lost influence. The morning of the day upon which he was dismissed,* he wrote to Swift to say, that to-morrow morning he should be a private person; and he added, that he had had no power since the 25th of July 1713. In naming this date, he alludes to a letter which he wrote to Lord Bolingbroke at that time, containing his scheme of the queen's affairs, and his ideas as to what was necessary for Bolingbroke to do. He seems then, even thus early, to have discovered that his influence was gone, and to have entirely retired from business, although he chose to continue to enjoy the honours of his post.

His anticipations were correct. A cabinet council was held that evening, at which all the ministers attended. In the discussions which arose, Oxford broke the restraint which he had hitherto imposed upon his resentment. The presence of the queen, the authority of a sovereign, the feebleness of a weak and sickly woman, could not avert the storm,

* 27th July.

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or moderate the rancour of the rivals' recriminations. Threats and reproaches were exchanged with a noise and scurrility which disgraced the men who uttered, and insulted the sovereign who permitted them. The hoarded enmity of three years now at last found vent in words. Every act of their ministerial career formed a topic of reproach and retort; and even the queen herself was not excepted from the angry denunciations of the discarded courtier. Lady Masham was particularly distinguished by his abuse;—he told her that she and her coadjutor had ruined him with the queen by lies and misrepresentations: and when his staff of office was demanded, he delivered it, indignantly declaring that he would yet be revenged upon them all, and would find means to leave some people as low as he had found them. Oxford's best friends regretted this womanish ebullition of impotent rage, so contrary to his usual conduct, so opposed to his general character for temper and moderation. Those who wanted only an excuse to abandon him, readily found one in the indignity which was offered to their mistress. In his fall, he seemed to be entirely deserted by the policy which had raised him to power and maintained him in its possession; and he retired from the theatre of all his triumphs, having secured few friends, but made many enemies.*

* Swift's Letters of this date.

CHAPTER XVI.

Bolingbroke's Ambition disappointed.—Illness of the Queen.—Proceedings of the Council.—The Earl of Shrewsbury made Lord Treasurer.—Death of the Queen.—Critical Position of Bolingbroke.—His Letter to the King.—Is dismissed.—Dissolution of Parliament.

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But although Bolingbroke's first great step was accomplished by the ruin of his rival, he was yet far from the altitude which his ambition persuaded him was within his reach. The Earl of Shrewsbury, who during the time that these court intrigues were being matured had been employed at a distance, as ambassador to France, and since as lord lieutenant of Ireland, was now present. He was a nobleman possessing extensive interest with his party, moderate in his sentiments, and attached to the protestant succession. He was likely to prove an obstacle to Bolingbroke's design of leaping into the seat from which he had just torn his early friend; and this Bolingbroke well knew. All along he viewed this nobleman with suspicion, and was dubious as to the part he would take. This uneasiness as to Shrewsbury's sentiments he did not conceal. Upon one occasion, when a friend delivered to him from

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Swift a memorial to be presented to the queen, asking for a place which was then vacant, he was reckoning the probabilities there were of his obtaining the request. He had left Oxford and Shrewsbury in order to converse with the friend, and pointing to them as they walked on, he said, "As to that man," (Oxford,) "I know upon what footing I stand with respect to him; the other I do not." *

In the debate which followed the dismission of Oxford, Shrewsbury took part. The difficulties which occurred to the formation of the commission to perform the duties of the office were insurmountable. Every one saw that it was a post of much danger and little profit. If the queen lived, and the ulterior designs of Bolingbroke should succeed, they would be immediately removed to make way for him: should the queen die, or should Bolingbroke's endeavours to maintain himself and his friends in power prove unsuccessful, the acceptance of this post would only expose them more prominently to the rage of the succeeding party. To these considerations, in many, a jealousy of the secretary's ascendency was to be added; and united, they effectually prevented the decision of the question as to who should form the new commission.

In a stormy discussion upon this point, the sitting of the cabinet council was prolonged until past two in the morning; and then they adjourned until the evening without coming to any resolution. During

* Swift's Letters.

all this time the queen had been present. The violence of the discussions with Oxford, the fatigue of a lengthened sitting, the critical state of her affairs, and the certain prospect of future disquiet, were too much for a constitution already weakened by disease: she retired from the scene in the council-chamber declaring she should not outlive it, and was carried to her bed, whence she never again rose.

This alarming illness of the queen was an event which Bolingbroke had not foreseen or provided for. It at once destroyed the airy fabric of ambition which he had with so much care constructed. The council again met; but the queen had sunk into a lethargic state, and their resolves were of course destitute of authority. They again adjourned; and the next day the physicians reported that the queen was sensible.

While the ministers were anxiously discussing the measures to be taken in this extraordinary conjuncture, the Dukes of Somerset and Argyle abruptly entered the chamber. These noblemen, particularly the latter, had been the especial objects of Bolingbroke's persecution while he ruled the ministry; and while all regarded them with amazement, he beheld them with no small degree of alarm. The Duke of Shrewsbury, however, thanked them for their zeal in attending to afford their advice at this important crisis, and they took their seats at the table. They proposed that the physicians should be examined; and they having delivered a written declaration

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that the queen's consciousness was returned, Argyle moved that the council should address her, to deliver the treasurer's staff into the hands of the Duke of Shrewsbury. To the mortification of Bolingbroke, the proposal was immediately adopted; and when they communicated their resolution to the queen, she declared they could not have recommended a man she liked better than the Duke of Shrewsbury. She immediately gave him the white staff of office; and upon his tendering that of chamberlain, which he then held, she refused to receive it, but told him to keep it and use it for the good of her people.

Thus was the ambition of Bolingbroke disappointed, and thus were all his well-contrived schemes hopelessly defeated. The sudden illness of the queen alone deprived him of the highest office in the kingdom,—a post which, if he had once obtained, it is highly probable he would have permanently held. The futile overtures of Oxford to Marlborough, which Bolingbroke had made a charge against him to the queen, he had since then himself imitated, and probably with better success. It is said, that, notwithstanding their political differences, a reciprocity of friendly feeling had always existed between these two great men; and that Marlborough had often expressed an affection for St. John, who admired him as a general as much as he feared him as a politician.* That friendship should exist between two party leaders and political opponents at

* Stuart Papers.

a time when the hatred of the factions was more bitter towards each other than at any other period of our history, is certainly improbable; and there is nothing in their public correspondence to give weight to the assertion: on the contrary, many of the letters which have been quoted show that St. John made frequent and severe animadversion upon his conduct; and if Marlborough could have brooked reproof from a man so much his junior, he would find it difficult to retain kindly feelings for any member of an administration which had driven him from all his employments, and abandoned him to the mercy of his most violent enemies.

That any private friendship subsisted between Marlborough and St. John is therefore improbable; but at the same time there was none of that bitterness which made him scorn all the overtures of Harley. A return to his country and to the emoluments of office was an offer which Marlborough was well able to appreciate: and while Bolingbroke and his adherents were confident of succeeding to all power in the new ministry, they made proposals, to which there is every reason to believe that Marlborough acceded, and that, at Bolingbroke's instance, he was then on his way to England to assume the command of the army, and to concert measures to bring about a coalition with the more moderate men of the Whig party. This scheme Bolingbroke himself had been attempting to put in practice. Upon the very day he procured the treasurer's dismissal, he

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entertained at dinner, in Golden-square, where he then lived, Generals Stanhope, Cadogan, and Palmer, who met there Sir William Windham and Mr. Craiggs; a mixture of Whigs and Tories which intimated his distrust of the present ministers, and occasioned various conjectures as to his probable purpose.

By the dexterous prosecution of this design, Bolingbroke probably intended, and would very possibly have succeeded in establishing his power upon a firm and stable basis. If the favourite continued firm in his interest,—and Bolingbroke well knew how to preserve her favour,—the queen might have been gradually weaned from her exclusive affection for the high-church Tories, and, placing her confidence in Bolingbroke, who pretended a perfect community of sentiment with her upon this subject, she might have assented to admit a portion of the Whigs to office, while she depended upon her minister to control or frustrate any liberal designs they might entertain towards the dissenters. The name of Marlborough would have attracted many to his standard. The desertion of these would have disconcerted and disunited his opponents; and with a ministry composed of the majority of both parties, he might have made his own terms with the house of Hanover, and continued as powerful and supreme under George as he would certainly have been under Anne.

Such were the brilliant prospects which his success suggested, when the sudden death of the queen,

and the energetic conduct of the Dukes of Somerset and Argyle, dissipated the dreams of ambition, and introduced the stern reality of exile and proscription. A.D. 1714.

The moments which intervened between the insensibility and death of Anne were not lost. Bolingbroke and his adherents found themselves defeated and powerless, and, upon reflection, thought it would be their interest to remain silent. Meanwhile the most active precautions were taken to secure the succession of the elector, and to cripple the energies of the Jacobites. The heralds and life-guards were ordered to be in momentary readiness to proclaim George, King of Great Britain. A letter was immediately despatched to acquaint that prince with the hopeless state of the queen, and to urge his immediate departure for Holland, where a fleet should be ready to receive him immediately the event contemplated had occurred. It was discovered that the security of the seaport towns had been much neglected; and Lord Bolingbroke, when expostulated with upon this subject, endured with calm contempt the reprimand of his victorious rivals. A corps of six hundred men were with all speed formed from the pensioners of Chelsea Hospital, and committed to such officers as were immediately at hand. These were directly sent down to Portsmouth to reinforce the garrison; an embargo was laid upon the ports, a fleet was sent to sea, and Brigadier Whetham was ordered immediately to repair to Scotland to crush any attempt of the Jaco-

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bites in that kingdom: in short, every measure was adopted which could strike terror into the adherents of the Stuarts, and preserve the peace of the kingdom.

The intention of those who directed all these measures was fully answered: the peaceful succession of the elector was secured, and the people were convinced that the queen's ministers had entered into a conspiracy to bring in the Pretender. Nothing but a great and imminently impending danger could, they thought, have inspired the new government with so much activity: they naturally estimated the danger by the standard of the preparations made to meet it.

The crisis passed without the anticipated struggle. Upon the queen's death, which happened two days after, King George was proclaimed with as little excitement as if he had been an hereditary prince long known and beloved by the people he was about to govern.

The Duke of Marlborough returned to England the day the queen died, but under very different circumstances to those he had anticipated. Instead of coming to place himself in office under the patronage of Bolingbroke, he found his party triumphant in power, and himself once again lord of the ascendant. He made a public entry into London, amid the acclamations of the people, and the censure of those who thought that some respect was due to the memory of her who had bestowed upon him all his honours, and gone beyond her

people's wishes in the furtherance of his fortunes. Among those whom this ostentatious show of triumph disgusted was Bolingbroke, who declared he ought to be sent to the Tower for it. This expression has been advanced to prove that there was never any understanding between them;* but Bolingbroke's sentiments towards the duke might have been very friendly when he was preparing to welcome him as an ally, and yet may have undergone a considerable change when he saw him enter London as the captain of the victorious Whigs. But the event proved that Marlborough had gained but little by the change: instead of remaining chief of his party, he was soon after abandoned by them, and slighted by the king, who was probably aware of his coquetry with the Stuarts. His sun was now for ever set, and he soon afterwards retired to enjoy in the decline of life that domestic privacy which a life of ambition had never suffered him to taste. Yet, even in the retirement of Blenheim, he could not help convincing his countrymen that the love of money, which had been the reproach of his youth and manhood, was not weakened or subdued by the approach of age.†

But the future fortunes of Bolingbroke were not

* Stuart Papers.

† It is well known that constant disputes with his workmen at Blenheim harassed the last years of Marlborough's life. Marlborough after this time frequently appears in the debates in the lords, but never as taking any very conspicuous part in their proceedings.

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so monotonous and equable. 'Without waiting for the production of the deed by which the king had before named additional lords justices, he could judge that the power and government of the kingdom were already in the hands of his enemies. This was soon demonstrated: no sooner was the new council of regency assembled, than the secretary was virtually dismissed from his office; the postmaster was directed to bring all letters addressed to the secretary to them, by whom they were opened and canvassed; and rumours were spread that the foreign despatches had discovered the most treacherous confederacies between England and France against the emperor and the Dutch, who were the especial favourites of the Whigs.

Now that the lion was fallen, every scribbler could throw his paper pellet at him; but even now this was not to be done with impunity. One of the organs of the Whigs having revived the old accusation of an attempt to remodel the army, Bolingbroke demanded and obtained his punishment, and by this well-timed boldness checked the torrent of calumny and abuse which was ready to flow in upon him. But this was a very little consolation amid the indignities he was now made to endure. Resign his post of secretary he could not until the king arrived; and could he have done so, it had been but questionable policy to allow his enemies a pretence for saying that his fear evidenced his guilt, and that his abrupt desertion of his post showed

that he had far other designs in view than the succession of the present king. This he would not —he could not do: he continued to discharge his duties as secretary of state, and in the fulfilment of those duties he endured with a contempt, which deprived them of their sting, all the petty indignities which the insolence of little minds could suggest. The new courtiers had their cue, and nothing was so meritorious as to insult the secretary: he was compelled to stand with his bag of papers in his hand at the door of the council-chamber, while those who would have shrunk with terror from an encounter with him in the senate vented their pert witticisms, and even encouraged the menial servants to imitate their conduct.

Such things could not seriously discompose Bolingbroke. Whatever may be his errors or his vices, he possessed a dignity of sentiment which could enable him to derive amusement from these petty and innoxious efforts to make him feel acutely his loss of power. With an elasticity of spirit which was inherent in him, he would not even now admit that the cause was desperate; he rather hoped that by a steady course of conduct all would yet be well. His reliance appears to have been placed upon a high opinion he had formed of the new king's moderation and sagacity; and he persuaded himself that such a prince would be unwilling to irritate a party which comprehended nearly all the landed property of the kingdom, and was so powerful either

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for good or evil. These expectations appear in a letter which he wrote to the new king two days after the death of the queen. In this acknowledgment of his allegiance, he expresses joy at becoming the subject of so great a prince, and assures him of his zealous and dutiful endeavours for the promotion of the interests of his government. He congratulates his sovereign that the factions which had been accustomed to disturb the government had ceased: "And God grant," he says, "that the wisdom and firmness of your majesty may ever prevent their revival!"* On the same day he wrote a short letter to Swift, which betrays none of the despondence of the defeated votary of ambition. "I have lost," he writes, "all by the death of the queen but my spirit; and I protest to you I feel that increase upon me. The Whigs are a pack of Jacobites; that shall be the cry a month hence, if you please."†

The only reply which he received to his letter to Hanover served to undeceive him as to the character of the king. On the 31st of August a despatch arrived from Holland, with a warrant to create the electoral prince, Prince of Wales, and another for the dismissal of Bolingbroke. This might have warned him of the measures which were afterwards pursued. The seals of office were demanded of him by the Duke of Shrewsbury, who took possession of

* Bol. Cor. vol. ii. — The letter is in French. The elector was profoundly ignorant of the language of the people he came to govern.

† Swift's Letters.

his papers, and locked and sealed the room in which they were. Mr. Hare, the under-secretary, had however found means to remove those which were most available against his principal; but Bolingbroke refused to take advantage of his foresight, and they were all returned.*

This seizure of his papers was a menacing commencement, but Bolingbroke manifested no apprehension: his utmost efforts were exerted to keep alive the hopes of his party. Even now he declared that the Tories were resolved not to be crushed, and that was sufficient to ensure their safety. He took every opportunity of expressing his contempt of any charges his enemies might bring against him: he declared that he defied their enmity, and that, with the support of an approving conscience, he would meet every inquiry that could be instituted, and triumph in every examination they might direct against him.

These bold assertions were not unnecessary to maintain any spirit in the party; nor were they without their success. His adherents hoped they would be all found as immaculate as their leader boasted, and a respectable party now ranged themselves under his command. Presence of mind under critical circumstances is the test of superiority, as well in the cabinet as in the field. Bolingbroke's coolness and decision had vouched his capacity, and many believed his assurances that he yet would triumph.

* Dr. King's Anecdotes.

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During the short session of parliament which ensued, and which was merely assembled to settle the civil list, provide for the security of the kingdom, and to transact some routine business, there were but few points to excite party animosity. The Tories, however, still mustered in respectable numbers; and if they were deserted by the Whimsicals, they were joined by all who were at all tainted by Jacobite principles.

After this short session the parliament was dissolved, and it was then that the despatch arrived which removed Bolingbroke from his office. That he was still an object of terror to the now dominant party, appears from the testimony of Mr. Addison. In a letter to Hanover, the new secretary says, "The removal of the Lord Bolingbroke has put a seasonable check to an interest that was making in many places for members in the next parliament." And he adds, "that it was very much relished by the people, who ascribed to him, in a great measure, the decay of trade and public credit."*

That Bolingbroke was not so unpopular as Addison would persuade his new master, we may infer from the fact, that when he, with the other great officers of state, joined the procession which proclaimed the king; while Oxford was vehemently hooted, and many others of the Tories received indubitable proofs that they had lost with the favour of the sovereign that of the people; an attempt to

* Han. Papers, Macpherson, vol. ii. p. 652.

raise a clamour against Bolingbroke signally failed, and was immediately drowned in general acclamations.*

When Bolingbroke wrote his letter to Swift, he had hope for himself and his party:—the insolence of the lords justices damped, and the censure passed upon him by the king in removing him extinguished, that hope. The confidence of his tone proceeded from the pride, not from the hopes, of the party leader; and where he could reveal his sentiments without increasing the despondency of those who looked to him for support, he freely acknowledged and bewailed the hopelessness of the Tory cause. A letter of his to the Bishop of Rochester, written immediately after his removal, discovers the darkness of his forebodings. It runs thus:—

"To be removed was neither matter of surprise nor of concern to me; but the manner of my removal shocked me for at least two minutes.

"It is not fit that I should be in town without waiting upon the king when he arrives; and it is less proper that I should wait on him after what has passed, till by my friends some *éclaircissement* has been had with him. I have writ to the king, and I have spoke with M. Bothmar;† and both, I hope, in a way becoming me. On Sunday morning I go

* "Though a few hissed, the acclamations immediately drowned the noise."—*Letter from Ford to Swift*, Aug. 5.

† Bothmar was an authorized agent of the king, who had resided in England since June. The account given of

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home, from whence I shall return as I receive advices from hence.

"The satisfaction and the advantage of conversing with your lordship are so great, that I shall certainly make use of the opportunity of seeing you, which you are so kind as to afford me. About eight to-morrow in the evening I will not fail to be at the Deanery.

"I cannot conclude this letter without assuring you that I am not in the least intimidated from any consideration of the Whig malice and power. But the grief of my soul is this,—I see plainly that the Tory party is gone. Those who broke from us formerly, continue still to act and speak on the same principles and with the same passions; — numbers are still left, and those numbers will be increased by such as have not their expectations answered: but where are the men of business that will live and

this interview in the Hanover Papers, Macph. ii. 650, is this:—

"Sept. 3rd. — Bolingbroke had been with Bothmar: he attributed his disgrace to the insinuations of Oxford, whom he suspects of having misrepresented him to the King. Oxford endeavours to persuade the world that, by his influence with his majesty, Bolingbroke was turned out, in order to create a belief that he will have still the giving away of employments." In another place Bothmar says, "Bolingbroke said formerly, that he would never serve the elector: he did not believe then that the time would ever be when he would be taken at his word." There were not wanting persons about the new king who would remember or invent many similar speeches when Bolingbroke's name was mentioned.

draw together? You, my lord, know my thoughts as well as you know your own. Nothing shall tempt or fright me from the pursuit of what I know is right for the church and nation; but the measures of the pursuit must, I fear, be altered. Till to-morrow, my lord, adieu." *

The despair which Bolingbroke felt was nowhere visible in his conduct; nor did he manifest any sign of dread or apprehension. The new elections were much in favour of the Whigs; and the new court party counted upon a large majority. Meanwhile, Bolingbroke was to be seen every day in public; he spoke and acted with his usual openness and carelessness; nor, while he appeared so perfectly unconcerned and confident, could his enemies thoroughly enjoy their triumph.

* Bol. Corr.

CHAPTER XVII.

Proceedings of the New Parliament.—Disgrace of Oxford.—The King refuses to see Bolingbroke.—Dismay of the Tories.—Flight of Bolingbroke.—Circumstances of his Escape.—Letter to Lord Lansdowne.

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THE first act of the new parliament declared that they were determined to remove this provoking indifference of the discarded secretary; and it also discovered that he was ready and able to oppose their designs. The king, in his opening speech, desired them to let no unhappy divisions of parties here at home divert them from pursuing the common interests of their country; yet he hardly followed the advice he had given, when he hinted that there were persons who designed to deprive him of the affection of his people.

In answer to this clause of the speech, the lords proposed to address his majesty, that they doubted not that he, with their assistance, would be able to extinguish the very hopes of the Pretender, and recover the reputation of this kingdom in foreign parts; "the loss of which,"—thus the clause was worded,—"we hope to convince the world by our

actions, is by no means to be imputed to the nation in general."

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To this part of the address there was a violent opposition made by the late ministers, led on by Bolingbroke. He expressed the deepest concern for the memory of the late queen, which he said he would do all in his power to vindicate; that he had had the honour to be one of her servants, and if he had done anything amiss, he would be contented to be punished for it; but that he thought it hard to be censured, and unjust to be condemned, unheard. His present majesty, he said, had several times expressed a great respect and tenderness for the late queen's memory; and was a prince of so great wisdom, equity, and justice, that he was sure his majesty would not condemn any man without hearing what he had to say for himself;—that so august an assembly ought to imitate so great a pattern.* After urging these topics in a lengthened speech, he moved that the words "recover the reputation of this kingdom in foreign parts," might be changed to "maintain the reputation," &c., and the rest of the paragraph be omitted. In this amendment he was supported by his old colleagues, and Shrewsbury among the rest; and opposed by the Marquis of Wharton, now lord privy seal, and Earl Cowper, now lord chancellor.† These expressed all respect

* Parl. Hist.

† Shrewsbury was soon after removed from his high office, and became groom of the stole; being the only Tory who was retained about the

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and reverence for the memory of the queen, but distinguished between her and her ministry; and they maintained that the clause was amply justified by the mismanagements of the latter,—an argument which found some support in the speech from the throne. Lord Cowper declared that it was not condemnatory of any individual, but only of the peace in general, which the majority of the house were certainly then disposed to censure. He objected to the amendment, because the word "maintain" would signify no more towards the justification of the guilty, than the word "recover" did towards the condemnation of the innocent. The original address was carried by a majority of nearly two to one; and this division gave Bolingbroke presage of the treatment he was now to expect.

In answering similar objections in the commons, Mr. Robert Walpole said that nothing was farther from his intention than to asperse the late queen; that he rather designed to vindicate her memory by exposing and punishing those evil counsellors who deluded her into pernicious measures: whereas the opposite party endeavoured to screen and justify those counsellors, by throwing on that good, pious

new king. Among other changes, Marlborough was made captain-general of the forces; the Earl of Sunderland, lord-lieutenant of Ireland; Walpole, paymaster of the forces; and Townshend and Stanhope, secretaries of state. The privy council was also dissolved, and a new one appointed, more consonant with these ministerial arrangements. —*Hist. Reg.*

and well-meaning princess all the blame and odium of their evil counsels. As to censuring the late ministers without hearing them, and condemning the peace without examination, which had been objected to as unjust and unprecedented; he said that they must distinguish between censuring ministers and condemning the peace in general, and condemning particular persons;—that they might in equity and justice do the first, because the whole nation was, he said, already sensible that their honour and true interest were given up by the late peace; that in due time they would call them to an account who made and advised such a peace; but God forbid that they should ever condemn any person unheard.*

This was fearful evidence that the thunder-clouds were gathering above: the only consideration which remained was, whether to prepare to meet or to avoid the storm.

Oxford was not without his share in the impending danger. His intrigues, his cabals, his half-measures, his indecisive conduct, were all in vain to procure favour, or even to secure for him impunity. When he hurried with eager expectation to meet the king upon his landing at Greenwich, he met the most mortifying reception that the studied malice of his enemies could prepare for him. Bolingbroke delights to commemorate his disgrace. "Oxford," he says, "by his secret negotiations at Hanover, took it for granted that he was not only

* Parl. Hist.

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reconciled to that court, but that he should under his present majesty's name have as much credit as he had enjoyed under that of the queen. He was weak enough to boast of this, and to promise his good offices voluntarily to several,—for no man was weak enough to think them worth being solicited. In a word, you must have heard that he answered to Lord Dartmouth and Mr. Bromley, that one should keep the privy seal, and the other the seals of secretary; and that Lord Cowper makes no scruple of telling how he came to offer him the seals of chancellor. When the king arrived, he went to Greenwich with an affectation of pomp and of favour. Against his suspicious character, he was once in his life the bubble of his credulity; and this delusion betrayed him into a punishment more severe, in my sense, than all that has happened to him since, or than perpetual exile. He was affronted in the manner in which he was presented to the king. The meanest subject would have been received with goodness; the most obnoxious, with an air of indifference; but he was received with the most distinguishing contempt. This treatment he had in the face of the nation. The king began his reign, in this instance, by punishing the ingratitude, the perfidy, the insolence which had been shown to his predecessors. Oxford fled from court covered with shame,—the object of the derision of the Whigs, and of the indignation of the Tories."

The pleasure Bolingbroke evidently feels in

dwelling upon this public mortification of his enemy, is not the only evidence we have that a common misfortune could not mitigate their mutual enmity. Bolingbroke's antipathy was so great, that even the hope of another struggle with the Whigs could not tempt him to an accommodation. He abhorred Oxford to that degree, that, rather than concert measures with him for their mutual safety, he preferred any extremity of persecution—nay, he was ready to prefer death itself, to the appearance of even a temporary friendship.

Bolingbroke, we have seen, had made advances towards the king, as well as Oxford: and they were not more favourably received. A message from the court requiring his presence when the seal was removed from the secretary's office, he excused himself from attending, observing that so trifling a formality could be performed by one of the under-secretaries: but he seized the occasion to request the honour of kissing the king's hand, and made many protestations of loyalty and submission.

His request was refused, and his protestations probably disbelieved. Bolingbroke was then convinced that he had no protection to hope for from his sovereign—no chance of removing the opinion he had formed to his disadvantage. The same discovery was now fully made by the rest of the party. Many of the Tories had reckoned upon sharing the emoluments of office,—all had counted with Bolingbroke upon impunity: and such, we are

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assured, was the intention of the king when he set out to take possession of his throne. He had been assisted to that throne by the Whigs, who had watched with jealous vigilance every movement which could threaten his succession: it was expected—it was right, that those who had assisted him to gain should share his success; but that violent measures should be immediately taken to crush the fallen party,—to pursue to the scaffold men who at most had only been guilty of a want of skill in conducting a most intricate business, and of taking false steps in a conjuncture of no ordinary difficulty,—this was an extremity of party rancour certainly never contemplated by the sovereign, and warranted by no principle of patriotism or justice.

A similar design, of which the Whigs were then to have been the objects, had been before formed by the October Club: but this violence Harley and St. John, to their honour, withstood, and continued firm in their resolution for moderate measures, although their administration was several times, by the disaffection of those of their party whom they thus disobliged, dragged forward to the very brink of ruin. Bolingbroke, therefore, had established no precedent for the conduct which was thus pursued against him.

The cause of all this violence may be traced in the result of the elections. The majority of the Whigs who were now returned had been long excluded from taking any part in public affairs, or having any voice in the government of the country:

they came into parliament smarting under the recollection of the insignificance they had endured, and they found that the favour of the court, the establishment of their power, and the gratification of their revenge, were by no means incompatible objects.

Walpole, who could not forget his expulsion from the house of commons by these very men he now had at his mercy, was rather inclined to direct than to calm the storm. It is said to have been at his solicitation that the king changed his intentions of clemency towards the Tories, and consented to abandon one portion of his people to the fury of the other. Walpole urged the necessity of an example —the Jacobite tendency of the party — but, above all, the difficulty of managing the commons without making some sacrifice to their resentment. Expediency obtained what justice could not be prevailed upon to advocate ;—the king withdrew his protection.

It has been charged upon the Whigs by their adversaries, that their conduct in this respect was prompted by a cruel and cold-blooded policy, not by the heat of passion and resentment. It was their interest, say they, that the house of Hanover should succeed to the crown in a storm: but as they were disappointed in this, and their services had not been so prominent in securing the succession as they wished, they were willing that their zeal might be made apparent in maintaining them upon the throne they had so peacefully ascended. Nothing would

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so effectually answer this purpose as some rash attempt in behalf of the Pretender; and nothing would be so likely to induce such an attempt as the persecution of the Tories, who had among them all the elements of a Jacobite party.

That such was their intent, the character of the men engaged in the investigation forbids us to imagine; but that the effect was in furtherance of their interest, all must acknowledge. Those who are persecuted and insecure under one government, will naturally turn with hope to the prospect of another: and many now looked with favour upon the cause of the Pretender who had no affection for his person, no love for his principles, and little respect for his hereditary title. Resentment for the loss of an influence which the high-church party had been taught to consider their birthright, and fear for their future treatment when the secrets of their rule should be revealed, made them dejected as a party, and disaffected as individuals. This disaffection, as it became more extended, grew bolder; and Bolingbroke, during a short residence in the country, whither he had retired while the elections were going on, found that sentiments in favour of a restoration were more generally and less ambiguously expressed.* These expressions, however, as they were the offspring only of disgust with the reigning king, had yet resolved themselves into no settled design in favour of the Pretender; but they

* Letter to Sir William Windham.

were materials created by the Whigs for a powerful faction, and needed only a head to organize, and an object to unite them, to become formidable to the house of Hanover, and destructive to the liberties of their country.

The violence which gave birth to this dangerous spirit found in it an excuse for its indulgence. The proceedings of the new ministry discovered that no measures would be deemed too extreme,—that the utmost possible punishment was contemplated. Not satisfied with the evidence to be obtained from the papers in the public offices, the closet of the queen was ransacked to furnish matter of accusation against her ministers: her private letters were opened, and even those which she had sealed up to be burnt after her death did not escape the scrutiny of the jealous inquisitors.

While these preparations were avowedly made for the purpose of supporting an impeachment, Bolingbroke was well aware that its heaviest stroke must fall upon him. He was the most exposed man of his party; and whatever mercy the Whigs might extend to others, he could hope for none at their hands. If those who had acted but subordinate parts in the negotiation of these hated treaties felt themselves insecure, how much more certainly perilous was the situation of him who had borne the chief part throughout,—whose handwriting identified him with every memorial, letter of instructions, correspondence—in fact, with every paper

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which conduced to the arrangement of the treaties,—and whose incautious conduct and unrestrained sarcasm had exposed him to the personal resentment of the most powerful members of the present government!

Emissaries of the ministry were not wanting to apprize him of his danger: the condemnation of the leader of a numerous and lately powerful party might cost them a struggle, and must show their enemies their united strength. His absence would have been more acceptable to them, could they frighten him into flight. Bolingbroke heard his disinterested advisers, and discerned their object; but while he duly appreciated their sincerity, he did not despise their information.

He did not, however, require their confirmation of the report that an impeachment was then preparing against him: he had already received intimation that a resolution had been taken to pursue him to the scaffold. Whatever were the political crimes of Bolingbroke, such a penalty was outrageously disproportionate to them; nor could it have been allotted or inflicted with any colour of justice. But Justice holds but little influence in the decisions of party; and the assent which she might refuse, Revenge and Ambition readily accord. It is dangerous even for an innocent man to appear before a tribunal where his accuser is also his judge: the lords, who had prejudged his case and clamoured

for his impeachment, would be hardly convinced that their vituperation had been misplaced.

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Had Bolingbroke remained to meet the charge, he must have concerted his defence with Oxford, who was involved in the common calamity. "A sense of honour," he says, "would not have permitted me to distinguish between his case and mine own; and it was worse than death to lie under the necessity of making them the same, and of taking measures in concert with him."*

The recklessness of this hatred, which sacrificed to its indulgence the fortune of himself and of his friends, can be regarded only as the splenetic resentment of disappointed ambition, which, feeling acutely the stroke of adversity, looks around for some object on which it may resent the blow. But if it were folly to indulge old enmities at the expense of present security, it had been madness to wait the attack with no means of repelling it. In rejecting the plan of a reconciliation with Oxford, and the strict union and simultaneous movement of their whole party, he rejected a plan which was bold and feasible, easy of accomplishment, and calculated to compel their enemies to grant them honourable terms. He knew that the only alternatives were death, or flight and proscription.

For the latter he now prepared. His time for escape was short: the toils were already closing around him. The Whigs had concluded their in-

* Letter to Sir William Windham.

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vestigations: even the articles of impeachment were ready; — every night expectation was excited of the opening of the charge—every hour was fraught with danger. Bolingbroke's deportment was to the last moment bold and fearless;—his flight was precipitate and unexpected. When he had received intimation that the charge would be no longer delayed, he appeared the same night at the theatre, where he conversed with all his characteristic gaiety, bespoke a play for the next night, and subscribed to an opera to take place a fortnight after. But immediately the performance was over, he left London with precipitation, travelled rapidly to Dover, crossed the Channel in a small vessel, and landing at Calais the next day, found himself an exile.

Such was the reverse which a few short months wrought in the fortunes of Bolingbroke. Now wielding all the mighty energies of his country, giving an object to the prowess of her arm, directing the thunder of her power, controlling her allies, breaking the resources of her enemies, guiding all the intricate mechanism of her domestic government; diffusing the terror of her name abroad, mitigating the burden of the contest at home; and, lastly, hushing the clangor of war, which for ten years had rung through Europe, into the busy murmur of peace. Now behold the same man, exiled from the country he had governed, proscribed by the people he had ruled, sheltered only by the enemy he had subdued!

No sooner was the news of Bolingbroke's flight known in London, than the greatest excitement prevailed amongst the party who were thus defrauded of their victim. The new ministry were loudly censured for suffering him to elude their vengeance; and the new senators, enraged at their disappointment, almost threatened to inflict upon their masters the punishment they had intended for the fugitive. To exculpate themselves, ministers commenced an investigation of the circumstances of his escape; and proved, from the precautions he had taken, that he could have had no hope of any connivance upon their parts.

The night of his departure was Friday, the 25th of March: and it was discovered that, after he left the theatre, he disguised himself in a black wig and a large coat; and under this concealment he joined M. La Vigne, one of the French king's messengers, who was then about to return to that court, and travelled as valet to that gentleman.

The circumstances of his journey after reaching Dover were stated by Captain Morgan, who held a commission in the marines, and who returned to London a few days after. As he had been instrumental in his escape, he was arrested, and examined before the privy council. He stated, that having sent a messenger to provide a vessel to take him to Calais upon private business, he travelled post to Dover on Saturday night. About six on Sunday morning he saw two men, whom he at first thought

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to be two French couriers, come into the inn where he then was. Soon after, one of them spoke to him, and discovered himself to be Lord Bolingbroke. His lordship was in disguise, having a black bob-wig on, a laced hat, and very ordinary clothes; but, notwithstanding his disguise, Captain Morgan immediately recognized him, as he knew him well, and had formerly received several favours from him. Lord Bolingbroke proposed to go over in the vessel which Captain Morgan had hired. The captain consented; and they went on board on Sunday. La Vigne only accompanied them; and they landed at Calais the same evening, about six o'clock. Soon after they had landed, the governor of the city waited on Lord Bolingbroke, and carried him to his house, where he remained when Captain Morgan left.

Bolingbroke's flight was of course for some time the all-absorbing topic of conversation. The curiosity excited upon the subject produced many separate accounts of his adventures at Dover. The following letter, which is somewhat more minute than the statement of Captain Morgan, was published at the time: it was dated from Dover.*

"Last Saturday there came to George Slater's the two Galways, who are cousins of Captain Galway, and presently went to the pier, and hired a vessel to go to Calais; pretending it was to examine the records of condemnation of their ship, which

* Political State.

was arrested when you was in town. And about twelve at night there came two gentlemen to them post from London, one of them a lord, and the other their uncle, Captain Morgan, expecting to go immediately on board, the tide just then serving; but the weather proving tempestuous, they were forced to stay, though very uneasily, till the next tide. My lord was kept locked up all the time, and nobody suffered to come near him, except La Vigne, the French courier, who went over with him. Sunday, after dinner, (though I don't hear they eat any,) the tide serving, the officers of port waited on them for fees, &c., amongst whom Mr. William Lambe, being in a double capacity, (as proctor for Galway in the cause he was pretending to go about, and also clerk of the passage,) went abruptly into their chamber, which put them all into the utmost confusion, especially my lord, who changed his colour, and looked as if he thought the devil was come for him: but Mr. Galway immediately took Mr. Lambe by the hand, and, leading him out of the room, asked his pardon, told him they were busy, and desired him and other officers to go to Mr. Dishald's, at the pier, and they would all come to them and pay the fees, take passes, and also consult farther about the law affair. But no sooner were the officers gone, than they went off in the bay on board the vessel, which was in the road. And now my lord, whom nobody in the house had seen before, was forced to appear. He had got on a very black wig, and a

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riding-coat, which he buttoned over his wig, and covered the lower part of his face. He carried on his shoulders a pair of leathern bags, and affected a clownish, country air in his walking; though nobody suspected him till he was gone off, and then some of the seamen fancied they knew him. He arrived at Calais about eight o'clock Sunday night, and there the governor's coach attended him on his arrival; and then the man with the riding-coat and black periwig was known to be the right honourable the Lord Bolingbroke. Yesterday Captain Morgan and the two Galways returned; and finding it was known they had conveyed over my lord, they grew very insolent, and came to poor George Slater, and bullied him, and told him, had he not been a common-councilman, they would have whipped him round the market for an informing rogue."

The precautions which Bolingbroke took to prevent recognition, sufficiently acquit the ministers of any connivance at his escape. No sooner had the curiosity and surprise excited by the circumstance in some degree subsided, than another affair connected with it afforded another topic of conversation for the coffee-houses. A letter was handed about, first in manuscript and afterwards in print, which was written by Bolingbroke to Lord Lansdowne from Dover, and by him, as the author had intended it should be, communicated to the public. So many squibs were constantly appearing about the fugitive nobleman, that the genuineness of this letter was for

some time doubted; but its authenticity was afterwards acknowledged.

"My Lord,

"I left town so abruptly that I had no time to take leave of you or any of my friends. You will excuse me when you know that I had certain and repeated informations from some who are in the secret of affairs, that a resolution was taken to pursue me to the scaffold. My blood was to have been the cement of a new alliance; nor could my innocence be any security, after it had been once demanded from abroad and resolved on at home that it was necessary to cut me off. Had there been the least reason to hope for a fair and open trial after having been already prejudged unheard by two houses of parliament, I should not have declined the strictest examination. I challenge the most inveterate of my enemies to produce any one instance of criminal correspondence or the least corruption in any part of the administration in which I was concerned. If my zeal for the honour and dignity of my loyal mistress and the true interest of my country has anywhere transported me to let slip a warm or unguarded expression, I hope the most favourable interpretation will be put upon it. It is a comfort that will remain to me in all my misfortunes, that I served her majesty faithfully and dutifully in that especially which she had most at heart—relieving her people from a bloody and expensive war; and

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that I have always been too much an Englishman to sacrifice the interest of my country to any foreign ally whatever: and it is for this crime only that I am now driven from thence. You will hear more at large from me shortly, &c. &c.

"BOLINGBROKE."

This letter was attacked with a virulence which showed that the danger which Bolingbroke had anticipated was not imaginary. His flight was of course deemed an evidence of his guilt; his defence of it was considered a libel upon his peers. Those who railed at him as a coward for withdrawing himself from their vengeance, at the same time declared that the evidence against him was sufficient to justify the extreme punishment which he knew they had resolved to inflict. The expressions which he apologized for as warm and unguarded, were declared to be the strongest evidence of traitorous and Jacobitish designs. Those who could remember any such, repeated them with all the exaggerations which a wish to magnify their own importance could suggest: those who could not, found it hard to be without any specimens of what the accused had acknowledged to exist, and found it easy to invent what they could not remember. The temper of the Whigs, and particularly the rage manifested by those who would have been his judges, sufficiently exculpate Bolingbroke from any charge of cowardice in avoiding a trial before a tribunal where his case was already prejudged.

His example had, however, no effect upon the other leaders of his party, who were determined to wait the event. Few of them had exercised so little caution as he had; and Oxford thought his lukewarm conduct could never deserve or excite any severe resentment. His conduct since his disgrace had been in exact accordance with his usual character, and in perfect contrast with the decided demeanour of Bolingbroke. It is said, that upon returning from Greenwich, after going for a short time into the country, he returned incognito, and remained skulking about London for some weeks. Thence he returned to his seat in Wales, to obtain his son's return for the family borough—a design in which he failed. For some time after this he was lost to the curious eyes of those who were delighted at his fall and hoped to be entertained with his prosecution. Some said he was still in Wales; others, that he had been seen at Burton-upon-Trent, travelling northwards: others declared he had followed Bolingbroke's example, and embarked at Milford Haven for Genoa; and again, it was said that he was upon his road to town. Like the whole of his life and conduct, his movements now were dubious, mysterious, and changeable. One circumstance seemed to indicate that he either dreaded the result of the impending examination, or now feared for the success of the scheme he had originated and fostered: he sold out all the stock—which was no inconsiderable sum—that he had in the South-Sea project, and probably

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invested it in foreign securities. This was a precaution which Bolingbroke had taken some time before: while climbing the rugged steep of ambition, he was not so dazzled by the splendour of the summit above him but he could think of the dangers which lay beneath; and while anticipating the probability of the event which now occurred, he had taken measures to alleviate, although he could not avert, the calamity.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Parliamentary Inquiry into Bolingbroke's Ministerial Conduct.—Appointment and Report of the Committee of Secrecy.

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Now the chief object of their enmity was gone,—since the power of the party was entirely broken, and they had nothing to fear from his opposition, nothing to hope from his condemnation,—the Whigs were in no haste to precipitate measures. It was better that their accusation should be plausible than speedy; and no pains were spared to render their information complete. A secret committee was formed, of which Walpole was chairman; and they were charged to examine all the papers* which the ministers had discovered and laid before the house relative to the late negotiations of peace and commerce. This committee continued sitting upwards of two months; and no industry was spared to discover those secret practices, which all believed to be so nefarious,

* These papers were brought up by Mr. Secretary Stanhope, in consequence of an address for that purpose: they consisted of twelve volumes bound and numbered, beside three smaller books. The committee was chosen by ballot, and consisted of twenty-one members.

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but of which no one had ever formed any very definite idea.

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On the 2nd of June, Mr. Walpole, as chairman of the committee, brought up their report. It commences by stating that the late ministry had suppressed many of the documents connected with the treaties, and then proceeds to examine those which the committee had before them. They remark upon the first propositions of France, that the loose and general terms in which they are conceived show that from the beginning it was the design of France to secure Spain and the West Indies to King Philip. They dwell with justifiable severity upon the duplicity of St. John, in assuring the Dutch that England would act only in strict conjunction with the States, and afterwards carrying on negotiations for above five months, and making no communication of them until after the special preliminaries were signed, and the seven general preliminaries were concluded and sent to them. This was certainly a direct violation of the eighth article of the grand alliance. By that article it was stipulated, "Neutri partium fas sit, bello semel incepto, de pace cum hoste tractare, nisi conjunctim *et communicatis consiliis cum alterâ parte.*" That St. John advised his mistress to a direct infraction of this condition, cannot be denied: he thereby rendered his country guilty of a breach of faith;—an act which no sincerity of intention, no purity of patriotism, can justify or excuse. A public minister may be honestly mistaken

in questions of ordinary expediency; — he cannot be mistaken in, he has no right to tamper with, his country's honour. Honesty with nations, as with individuals, is in every case the best policy: and the universal application of this maxim is sufficient to remove any infringement of that honesty from the sphere of legitimate power assigned to a minister.

In examining the papers connected with the preliminary parts of the negotiations, the committee remark upon the great caution exercised by the ministers in obtaining the queen's authority for everything they did: a strange exception to be taken by persons who were anxiously searching for some act not protected by such an authority, and who, by their very appointment, show that it was a caution which was never more required. A consciousness of guilt is not always the motive to caution. The persevering hostility ministers met with from the Whigs in opposition, left them little doubt as to the treatment they would meet with from them in power.

Their objections to the preliminaries are chiefly —That the succession was not at all secured;—no provision for removing the Pretender—no engagement not to support him, not even an acknowledgment of the queen, appeared in the first article. The treaty of commerce, the assiento contract, and the article of Dunkirk, they speak but shortly upon in considering the preliminaries; but they dwell severely upon the concessions with respect to the article upon Newfoundland. They cite the article of the

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grand alliance, by which it is stipulated that France shall by no means be permitted directly or indirectly to trade to any part of the Spanish West Indies; and they contrast this with the claim made by England, to have all the privileges granted by Spain to the subjects of France or any other nation.

The committee infer from the utter neglect of the interests of England which they thought the preliminaries manifested, that those interests were not the inducement to proceed in this extraordinary manner; and they quote from the draft of answers upon the conferences with Mesnager, that the object of ministers was to get the slight advantages they stipulated for signed first, that they "might be enabled to engage the queen to make the conclusion of the general peace easy to France."

The miserable effect of the breach of faith which England had committed is justly exposed, and the step severely reprobated. The committee had reason to remark, that under colour of the queen's authority, and the pretence of treating a peace, the ministers had put it in the power of France to divest the queen of all her allies. The French were not so ignorant nor so wanting to themselves as to overlook the advantage they had obtained: an ambiguous hint that the negotiations might be fully unveiled to the allies, was often of use to them when a point they were unwilling to concede was pertinaciously demanded.

The report proceeds to examine seriatim every

act of the negotiations, reflecting severely upon each;—where they are the legitimate effects of the first great error, of separating from the allies, with justice; in many other cases, with party partiality. The task of the committee was an easy one:—it is much less difficult to discover faults than to avoid them.

After disposing of the preliminary steps, the report arrives at the general conferences, and examines minutely every step of the English ministry. The correspondence of St. John is freely quoted. He is accused of pressing the States to surrender points which he himself had considered essential; and of declaring, when they had resolved to insist upon those points, that "he hoped this resolution was the last convulsive pang of an expiring faction." "And yet," remark the committee, "this resolution was no more than to insist on a demand in which all the allies were unanimous, and in which the British plenipotentiaries had themselves concurred."

The threats, the bribery, the manœuvring, which were made use of to induce the Dutch to come into the plans of the ministry, are all detailed; and the committee ridicule the manner in which her majesty's ministers were pleased to show their respect for the interests of "the queen's good friends and allies, the Dutch."

The guarantee that the crowns of France and Spain shall never be united, is next considered. When it was first proposed, England demanded real

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securities; intending by that, that some fortresses of importance should be left in neutral hands to guarantee the performance of the stipulation. This France, when the affair came to be discussed, refused; and England receded from her demand, requiring only a solemn renunciation of one of the crowns by each of the parties to whom the hereditary title could by possibility descend. In the answer to the memorial which was delivered upon this article by England, M. De Torcy candidly admits that the renunciation would be null and void by the fundamental laws of France; according to which laws, the prince most near to the crown is by necessity the heir. M. De Torcy declared that this was considered an inheritance which the prince receives neither from the king his predecessor, nor from the people, nor from the law; so that, when one king dies, the other succeeds him forthwith, without asking the consent of any one whatever. He succeeds, not as heir, but as the master of the kingdom; the seigniory of which belongs to him, not by choice, but by right of birth only. He is not beholden for his crown either to the will of his predecessor, or to any edict, or to any decree, or to the liberality of any person,—but to the law. This law is looked upon as the work of Him who hath established all monarchies; and we are persuaded in France, he says, that God only can abolish it. No renunciation, therefore, can destroy it; and if the King of Spain should renounce for the sake of peace, and in obedience to the king his grandfather, they would deceive

themselves that received it as a sufficient expedient to prevent the mischief we propose to avoid.

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Such was the candid opinion of the French minister upon the expedient proposed to answer the great end for which this arduous conflict had been commenced and carried on. The committee not unjustly remark upon the folly which could insist upon a promise which the party who was required to make it declared he did not consider binding, and that could deem such an engagement sufficient to satisfy what they professed to be a fundamental principle—that a re-union of the crowns of France and Spain was to be securely provided against. Former experience might have determined the value of regal renunciations; and if St. John's reliance was placed only upon the guarantee of the other powers of Spain, the long war which had been maintained was useless—the guarantee might have been entered into without the consent of the princes who had the right of succession, and instead of going to war to obtain a consent which could not be deemed binding, they might, upon the same grounds of general expediency, have forcibly interfered whenever the event should occur.

St. John, as a philosopher, might doubtless smile at the senseless casuistry which could assert a divine, immutable, hereditary right in the members of one family to govern those of every other—he had every right as an individual to expose its absurdity and ridicule its power; but he had no right, as a statesman, to act as though an opinion of its validity did

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not exist. As a philosopher, he should also have known that mankind are often more pertinacious in their defence of falsehood than in an adherence to truth; (and this fact he did know and often misemployed;) and he might have judged, that a war kindled by, and maintained on behalf of, an old superstition, is no less virulent and dangerous because that superstition is absurd. If France and her princes believed the doctrine De Torcy lays down—and it has never been asserted they did not—the one would be as likely to advance, and the other to maintain, an hereditary title to the throne, as though no renunciation had ever taken place, or any guarantee been entered into.

It would be absurd, in such a case, to argue the propriety of the security by the event. The expedient of the renunciations, upon which so much stress was laid, was either an error of great magnitude, or it was a mere scheme to fence with and escape from the difficulty which had produced and prolonged the war. If the former, it deserved censure in proportion to its obviousness and extent: if the latter, it was no less culpable—since real advantages, which might have been obtained in its stead, were bartered for a disingenuous and valueless concession.

The next object of examination to the committee is the suspension of arms—a measure which Oxford denies all participation in,* and abandons entirely to St. John,—and the orders to engage in no offensive

* Letter to the Queen.

enterprise which were given to the Duke of Ormond as a preliminary to this measure.

The suspension of arms then agree upon was always designated by the Whigs the *fatal* suspension of arms, and was generally looked upon as the most grievous error the Tories had committed during their administration. That it was advantageous to France and disadvantageous to the allies, will be readily allowed; but that there was anything so very faulty in the mere suspension of hostilities as to justify the outcry that was raised against it, may well be questioned. When England once determined to separate her interests from those of her allies, and to obtain the best terms she could for herself regardless of their claims, she took a decisive step, by which every after-act of the negotiations must be influenced. Having come to a definite and separate understanding with France, it was absolutely necessary to give that power some pledge of her sincerity. The part which had been already acted was not scrupulously honourable, and the French monarch might be pardoned for suspecting that those who had deserted their friends would not be very scrupulous in breaking engagements with their enemies. The prosecution of the campaign was an object dreaded by both England and France: by France, because any alteration in the relative situations of the contending parties must destroy all those diplomatic labours in which they had hitherto obtained a decided advantage; by England, because it would send the minis-

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ters again to ask war-supplies from a house of commons but little inclined to support war, or those who advocated it. The possession of Dunkirk, and the entire separation of France and Spain, were the two articles which were the most universally popular with the nation: these firmly secured, and the ministry hoped the opposition would be crippled in its energies. A suspension of arms, when the negotiations were already so far advanced, was a concession which France would naturally require; and the equivalents of Dunkirk and the settlement of the Spanish article were what the interest of the ministers would naturally suggest as the condition of their consent. The demolition of the fortifications of Dunkirk was a measure which Louis, after the immense sums he had expended upon their construction, was most averse to concede; and his irresolution showed itself in repeated and suspicious delays. These delays afford an opportunity to the committee to accuse the general of remaining idle when his instructions warranted his co-operation with the allies, and in refusing to take part in the active measures of the campaign. Under such circumstances, Ormond, in their opinion, neglected the true interests of his country, and tarnished his fame as a soldier. But in forming this opinion the Whigs made no allowance for the feeling which should ever induce a civilized chief to avoid the unnecessary effusion of blood; and they did not allow themselves to reflect, that if he was not justi-

fied by the letter, he certainly was by the spirit, of his instructions.

The cessation of hostilities was confined to the armies of the Netherlands, and was the natural consequence of the part which England had taken at the commencement of the negotiations. That by taking that part she divided her power, alienated her allies, and placed herself in a false position, has already been admitted. That Bolingbroke was the cause of this, has not been denied; and for this great false step he had been rightly censured: but the suspension of arms in the Netherlands cannot deserve the prominent place among the errors of his political career which has been allotted to it.* Admit that the preceding negotiations were correct, and it was just and necessary, although perhaps badly timed and unskilfully managed:—impugn their propriety, and this act will also be censured amid their train of consequences.

It became more immediately notorious by the magnitude of its effect. England withdrawn from the contest, France was an overmatch for the remainder of the alliance; and subsequent events too

* The instructions which were sent to the Duke of Ormond are said to have proceeded entirely from the queen, acting upon the advice of Harley. The latter never avowed this; but the Marchmont Papers say that Bolingbroke had risen in his place in the council-chamber to oppose, or at least delay the order, when the queen put an end to the discussion. This strong measure, therefore, was the offspring of Harley's policy and Anne's obstinacy.

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plainly evinced her superiority. At the battle of Denain, where the Duke of Albemarle was entirely defeated and himself taken prisoner, the ardour of the States for continuing the war received a check which the people there did not soon recover. But the indignation of the committee is particularly excited by the manner in which De Torcy communicates this victory to Bolingbroke, anticipating the joy of the English minister at the defeat of his ally, and promising himself that it will further their common object in reducing the obstinacy of the vanquished. Villars held the same language to the Duke of Ormond; and the committee triumphantly adduce these communications to show that England and France were now allies instead of enemies, and that the Dutch were the objects of this new alliance.

The occupation of Ghent and Bruges is the next point of importance in the transactions, and is equally censured. That Bolingbroke should write to the Duke of Ormond that this step had improved her majesty's views—that he should order him to secure the towns in the best manner he was able, and express a confidence that it would have a good effect upon the conduct of their allies, particularly excites the resentment of the committee, who look upon the Dutch as already abandoned and betrayed by England, and could see in their resentful and haughty behaviour no excuse for the measure which was adopted to curb their rising spirit of hostility.

The trifling of the French plenipotentiaries at Utrecht, and the connivance of the English, are the next subjects of observation. This, again, was a necessary consequence of England becoming separated in interest from her allies. She had a common interest with France in reducing their opposition, and she was of course obliged to pay for the assistance which France was ready to afford her for this purpose. It was natural that this payment should be made at the expense of those who had occasioned its necessity. According to the false system which had been adopted, England was thus obliged to play into the hand of France, and the States suffered.

That Bolingbroke should have deliberately wished the cession of Tournay to the French, or the weakening of the Dutch barrier, is a thing which, without some accusation of corruption—which has never been made or even suspected — is incredible: that an ardent desire to conclude the peace should force him to concede points too important to have been lightly given up, is a probability which the difficulties by which he was environed serve to account for. The first would have been treason: the second may be weakness, error, or even incapacity; but it cannot deserve so opprobrious an epithet or so extreme a punishment.

CHAPTER XIX.

Report of the Committee of Secrecy. — Considerations of the Charges it contains against Bolingbroke.—His Impeachment moved by Walpole.

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PERHAPS the committee are right, when they say that Tournay was at last obtained owing solely to the firmness and resolution of the States.

The precipitation of the negotiations, and the ardour shown for the conclusion of a separate peace, is the next subject of comment. The whole weight of censure for this measure is thrown upon Bolingbroke. From the correspondence, it appeared that the plenipotentiaries were adverse to coalescing so completely with the French. They write to the secretary, that they could say a great deal to justify their cautious proceedings with the French; and they express themselves to be satisfied that he would be of the same opinion, if he were to see their way of negotiating with all the allies, and how hard it was for them to obtain what to him it appeared impossible the French should make any difficulty to grant.

These remonstrances had little effect. They were replied to by instructions, pressing the immediate

signature of a separate treaty. They required more ample powers; and Bolingbroke, although he declares he has not enough sagacity to discover the deficiency in those they already had, immediately sends them.

The eagerness displayed by Bolingbroke in hurrying this important negotiation to a close, is not forgotten by the committee; and after stating the manner in which the several powers were brought to sign their treaties, they add, "The emperor and empire alone chose rather to bear the whole weight of the war, than submit to such disadvantageous and dishonourable terms as had been carved out for them by England and France."

The Spanish treaty is next considered; but, as this was in many instances connected with that with France, receives less detailed notice. A lengthened account is given of the hardships suffered by the Catalans. The ministry are accused of sending insufficient instructions in their behalf, and their ambassador, Lord Lexington, of not even fulfilling those instructions. The committee conclude their observations on this subject in these words:—

"The Catalans, thus abandoned and given up to their enemies contrary to faith and honour, were not however wanting to their own defence; but, appealing to Heaven, and hanging up at the high altar the queen's solemn declaration to protect them, underwent the utmost miseries of a siege, during which what multitudes perished by famine and the sword! How many have since been executed, and how

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many persons of figure are still dispersed about the Spanish dominions in dungeons, is too well known to need any relation.

" It is hoped, however, that the calamities of the Catalans will not be imputed to Great Britain, in general abused by the ministry with repeated assurances that everything was doing for the preservation of that unfortunate people."

Bolingbroke's want of sympathy with these courageous people has been before mentioned. While they assisted his views, they were his esteemed allies; but when their assistance was no longer wanted, his good will to them suddenly vanished. He seems in this to have borrowed a little of the high Tory feeling of some of his coadjutors,—a feeling naturally foreign to him. The Catalans espoused the unsuccessful party, therefore they were rebels;—they were rebels, therefore they deserved to be exterminated without pity.

It is made a ridiculous subject of accusation against Bolingbroke, among other things done by him during his mission to the French court, that he settled where the Pretender was to reside, and contributed to enable him to proceed to Lorraine. Strange that it should be deemed a crime to fix the residence of a dangerous enemy where he is least capable of annoyance! The timid and pusillanimous persecution of Hannibal has been reckoned to have tarnished the glory of those who overcame him: it manifested a fear of which Rome was deemed inca-

pable. If the shame of the fear increases with the insignificance of the object which inspires it, England can have little cause for gratulation in reviewing her conduct to the Chevalier St. George.

The letter of Oxford to the queen, which we have before examined, is the last subject of importance which is reviewed in the report. The committee state that their labours were yet incomplete, and that they were proceeding in their examinations. No further report was, however, presented.

This remarkable report was the result of a patient examination of all the papers which survived of the transactions which it professes to elucidate. These papers, when collected, formed no less than fourteen large volumes,—in themselves a sufficient proof of the assiduity of the man in whose hand the greater part was written. The report was followed by an appendix, containing the most important of the papers referred to, and which was also of no contemptible bulk.

It has been necessary to examine this production of the Whigs, in order to ascertain the grounds of the severe measures which were immediately adopted against Bolingbroke. His errors are in this document fully and forcibly detailed. Whatever crimes he may have committed, whatever faults he may have been guilty of, are there sure to be found,—and found decked out in all the hyperbole which the resentment of an incensed party could suggest. With every transaction of his public life open before them,

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—with all the secret papers by which those transactions were suggested or carried on,—with private and confidential letters* to shed their light upon the more guarded expressions of public despatches,—it is difficult indeed to suppose that these lynx-eyed investigators could have overlooked any material fact, or left undiscovered any act of his ministry which could particularly authorize the punishment they were resolved to inflict.

They had now those papers before them which Oxford had alluded to as furnishing evidence that Bolingbroke had been engaged in corrupt practices, and had prostituted the influence of his office to the purpose of private gain. No surer evidence can be adduced that this charge was without foundation than the conduct of the committee which was thus appointed to collect evidence against him. Although they retort upon Oxford the charge of concealing an act of embezzlement in which, by not divulging it at the time, he became an accomplice,—they never ventured to include it in the articles of Bolingbroke's impeachment. It is evident, therefore, that they did not believe it, and that they despaired of making any one else believe it. They made it a subject of charge against Oxford, because he had convicted himself by his own admission; and he in his turn defended himself by alleging their implied disbelief.

* Many such are quoted by the committee: there are several such to Prior, in which Bolingbroke says, "Remember this is from Harry to Mat,—not from the secretary to the ambassador."

Had Bolingbroke remained to defend himself against the prosecution which was now about to be instituted, it had been unnecessary for his biographer to pursue this report upon his ministerial conduct into its details. His defence would then have furnished an opportunity of pointing out the points in which he was really culpable and justly punishable, and to distinguish them from those which proceeded merely from the insolence of newly-acquired superiority, and the bitter feeling engendered by long and painful subjection.

No talents however brilliant, no wisdom however profound, no integrity however pure, could have conducted this intricate negotiation without allowing scope for much censure from examiners constituted as those were who now investigated the conduct of Bolingbroke. From party enmity we can expect no word of approbation; and from human efforts we cannot hope perfection. We may therefore allow some censures of the conduct of the negotiations to be just, without impugning the talent or patriotism of their chief author. Some errors may also be attributed to the violent opposition which raged at home and abroad, and which obliged him sometimes to abandon and at others to precipitate important measures. This consideration may extend yet farther the list of excusable errors which Bolingbroke may have committed without guilt, and acknowledged without shame. But in following the committee in their tedious examination, we have been

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obliged to view with them many defects in these negotiations which sagacity and integrity might have provided against, and which no violence of opposition could have prompted.

The first of these in time and magnitude has already been remarked upon. In determining to put the war upon a more equal footing—to enforce the full contributions of the allies, and to reduce the contingents of England to what the terms of the alliance required, St. John resolved as an English minister might and should have resolved. In separating from those allies, in taking part with the enemy, and in negotiating a separate peace, he acted treacherously towards his country's comrades in the contest, and involved her in the guilt of a breach of faith; which nothing less than the most imminent danger can empower a minister to commit, and which even that can hardly justify. His first movement had been a diverging from the straight line of candid policy; every subsequent step carried him yet farther from it. The consequences of his early error clogged his footsteps as he advanced, and rendered arduous and ungrateful what had otherwise been easy and pleasing. The fault had been committed;—the prize which prompted its commission was peace: and peace must then be obtained, whatever farther sacrifices might be required to secure it.

This was a fault which entered into every part of these extensive and long-continued negotiations. In every conjuncture, under every new demand, Boling-

broke retained unabated his desire for peace; and, by betraying that desire, gave France to understand that nothing she might offer would be refused. This was not an isolated mistake; it was a continuous chain of errors arising from one and the same false principle,—and that a principle alike derogatory to the dignity and interest of the country. A.D. 1715.

Had this proceeded from pure but mistaken patriotism, we might have admired the motive while we regretted the deed: had it proceeded from want of talent or deficiency in discernment, the agent might be pitied, and the resentment due to his miscarriages might fall only upon those who raised incompetence and folly to the seat of government and power. That the latter excuse may shelter Bolingbroke, can never be supposed. In him brilliance of oratory, elegance in writing, and depth of learning, were acquired only to form, and exercised only to aid, the statesman. Bolingbroke may be,—nay, he is, an object of just and heavy censure; he can never be an object of contempt.

It is with more regret that we feel the other ground of defence must also be abandoned. Patriotism may have told him that his country wanted peace: but that is no peace which patriotism can approve, where every advantage is successively given up in order only to put an end to a war in which his country had been uniformly victorious;—that could be no advantageous peace, by which, according to the expression of the Duke of Savoy, France, after having

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been beaten for ten years, was still left in possession of the prize of victory.

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No part of Bolingbroke's management is less defensible than the treaty of commerce with France. So baneful were its provisions, so incomplete its details, that even the ministry who had concluded it, when its errors were exposed, shrunk from the odious office of defending it. It is well known that the extraordinarily disadvantageous character of this treaty was owing, not to the power of the enemy with whom it was made, nor to any urgent necessity which existed that the commercial rights of a people essentially mercantile should be hastily and immediately determined. They were objects of such importance, that the most serious deliberation and the most cautious discussion could upon no subject have been more advantageously expended.

But the interest of Bolingbroke's party required an immediate conclusion of all difficulties. Parliament had been often prorogued; it must then have been called together. To call for war-supplies would have endangered, not only their popularity, but their places. A declaration that peace had been concluded, would, they thought, smooth down every difficulty, secure the favour of the multitude, and paralyze the efforts of the opposition. These anticipations were fallacious; but they were entertained. They promised extensive advantages to a party, and the interests of the nation were made to succumb.

We have Bolingbroke's own assertion,—and while

we own its candour we must assert its truth,—that he and his party came into court in the same disposition as all parties have done. The principal spring of their actions was to have the government of the state in their hands; — their principal views were the conservation of this power, great employments for themselves, and great opportunities of rewarding those who had helped to raise them, and of hurting those who stood in opposition to them. He declares, however, that it is true that with these considerations of private and party interest there were others intermingled which had for their object the public good of the nation,—at least, what they took to be such.*

The public good is here admitted to have been but a secondary object, which may be pursued as long as it concurs with or does not oppose party interest, but is not to be brought into competition with it. It was the misfortune of Bolingbroke that these two objects seldom coincided while he directed the councils of the nation; and it was his crime that he acted too strictly in accordance with the sentiment which seems to have been acknowledged as a rule of conduct by the party with which he acted.

The report of the secret committee† was so long, that its reading consumed six hours, and the patience of the Tories. After it had been read a second time, Mr. Robert Walpole, in that house

* Letter to Sir William Windham.

† This report was drawn up by Walpole.

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whence St. John had once expelled him, stood up and said, that he made no question that, after the report had been twice read, the whole house was fully convinced that Henry Lord Viscount Bolingbroke was guilty of high treason and other high crimes and misdemeanours; that therefore he impeached him of those crimes. He proceeded to recapitulate his errors, and to magnify them into the darkest crimes. He declaimed against him with all the power his eloquence could lend him, and with all the bitterness his resentment could suggest. Having drawn a portrait in which none but a personal enemy could recognize a likeness, he challenged the house to dispute its faithful resemblance. He declared with singular modesty and justice, that those who could defend or palliate his conduct must share its guilt; and concluded by ironically bespeaking the attention of the house for the defence which his friends were about to make.

So great was the power of the accuser, and such the effect of his eloquence, that his victim seemed as deserted and friendless as even he could have wished. A long silence ensued, which was at last broken by Mr. Hungerford; who, however, did not venture to enter into a defence of his late chief, but confined himself to contending the point that no accusation which had been made by the report could possibly amount to high treason.

The only other member of the house who dared to oppose the predominant party was General Ross.

This gentleman was an intimate friend of Bolingbroke, and was indebted to him for many favours. When he stood up to defend him, he was so overpowered by the novelty of his situation, that his feelings deprived him of utterance. After remaining some time in an attitude to speak, he was about to desist, overpowered by emotion. As he sat down in silence, cheers burst from every part of the house,—a tribute to friendship which even party animosity could not restrain. The general was for a moment reassured, and expressed his wonder that a hundred voices were not raised in behalf of a man to whom so many were bound by the obligations of friendship and gratitude; but, unable to proceed, he said he had much to say in his friend's defence, but he would reserve it to another opportunity. He sat down amid loud cheers, observing to a person who sat near him, "It is strange that I cannot speak for him, when I would so willingly fight for him."

This incident might show the estimation in which Bolingbroke was held by his friends, but it had little effect upon the purpose of his enemies. The resolution for his impeachment passed without a division. The same resolution was taken against the Earl of Oxford. And thus were these two men, who had held for four years the government and patronage of the empire, consigned to immediate ruin, with scarcely a voice raised in their behalf, and without a friend of sufficient energy to divide the house in their cause, and to mark his

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opposition to the proceedings against them by his vote.

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The motion for the impeachment was made on the 10th of June, upon the reading of the report: the articles were carried up to the house of lords on the 6th of August. They consisted of six charges of no inconsiderable length:—embracing his deception of the allies; his advising the separate treaty; his transactions with Mesnager in London; his disclosing instructions given to the plenipotentiaries by Gaultier; his advice to the French minister with regard to Tournay; and lastly, his promoting the yielding up of Spain and the West Indies to Philip of Spain,—whom the articles call the public enemy, the Duke of Anjou.

CHAPTER XX.

Consideration of the Articles of Bolingbroke's Impeachment.—Examination of his Conduct with regard to the Succession.

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It will be seen from the articles of Bolingbroke's impeachment, which are printed at length in the Appendix, that the only counts that by the utmost stretch of the law could be made to charge the ex-secretary with high treason were those which concerned the negotiations for the surrender of Tournay. This the committee construed to be an adhering to the queen's enemies within the statute of Edward the Third. The charge against Bolingbroke was therefore one of constructive high treason; a crime now happily unknown to our laws. His opponents, in the blindness of their rage, armed themselves with the same weapons which had been wielded with such dreadful effect by the arbitrary dynasty they were so cautiously excluding from the throne. A constructive extension of this act of Edward the Third had long been the ready instrument of tyranny when the parliament was found less corrupt than the bench: that which could not be done by statute, was with less difficulty obtained by the cruel analogies and

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heartless logic of the presiding judge. Parliaments had seen with indignation this species of tyranny practised by the sovereign; their passions now blinded them to the consequences of imitating the conduct they had condemned.

It has been, however, advanced by the unhesitating admirers of the men who pursued these extreme measures, that they were actuated only by a zeal for justice. These writers admit that the law was upon this occasion violently strained; but they affirm that, although the means were somewhat informal, the object was just and patriotic.* Sir William Windham forcibly urged in arguing against these measures, that the peace had been approved by two successive parliaments, and declared safe, advantageous, and honourable. "Our constitution," he said, "knows no limits to the power of the king, lords, and commons, assembled in parliament; and though a subsequent parliament may annul any laws which a former parliament has decreed, yet it cannot and ought not to call any ministers to justice for measures which have been sanctioned by the three branches of the legislature." This is the true and sufficient ground of Bolingbroke's defence. This consideration is sufficient to stamp all the proceedings against him with the character of a mere party persecution. But, say the apologists of his prosecutors, the crimes mentioned in the articles of impeachment were only the ostensible charges:

* Coxe's Life of Walpole, p. 68.

there were others, and far darker ones, of which he was notoriously guilty, but which could not be legally proved. If, then, there was one weapon in the armoury of justice which could be directed against him, that weapon the vindicators of public justice were bound to employ.

This great crime, of which Bolingbroke and Oxford were so confidently considered guilty, was a design to introduce the Pretender. The Whigs were firmly convinced that the late queen had designed that her brother should be her successor, and that her ministers had been the willing agents of her will. This charge was eagerly disseminated by all their writers, and was readily credited by a suspicious people. Accidental circumstances tended to increase its probability. In August 1714, the Pretender put forth a manifesto, containing this remarkable passage: "Upon the death of the princess our sister, of whose good intentions towards us we could not for some time past well doubt; and this was the reason we then sat still, expecting the good effects thereof, which were unfortunately prevented by her deplorable death."*

This accession of proof, slight and inconclusive as it was, gave great weight to the assertions of the Whigs. It came from an independent source, and people did not wait to examine whether a different object may not prompt the same conduct,—whether this might not be an idle boast, or the result of a pur-

* Tindal, vol. xviii.

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posed deception, or even a contrivance to foment those divisions which were so favourable to the alien's cause.

But, whatever may have been the object of this declaration, its effects were sufficiently palpable ;—none doubted that the late ministry had been engaged in a deep-laid conspiracy to set aside the protestant succession. This was the consideration which justified in the eyes of the nation the severity which was now inflicted upon them, and is the only apology which can be offered for the conduct of those who pursued them with such virulent animosity.

If the charge were true, we should be almost inclined to think with Stanhope and Walpole, that no technicalities should be allowed to arrest the arm of justice—that such offenders should not escape a punishment commensurate with their offence. But was it true? This is a question which is still disputed. It behoves us to investigate it.

Mr. Coxe,* while he asserts that the collateral evidence was convincing, adds, that "It must however be confessed that that part of the report which infers the intention of the late ministry to restore the Pretender is extremely weak, *founded only on vague conjecture and circumstantial evidence.*" Yet the committee who made this report had before them every document which could possibly throw light upon this subject: not only were the sealed

* Life of Walpole, p. 69.

papers of the discarded ministers open to them, but also the most private memoranda of the late queen; even those which she had sealed up and ordered to be burned after her death were opened, and every source of information was searched with microscopic care, in order to discover some traces of the scheme which all were so confident had existed.

And what was the result of so strict and diligent an investigation?—a mere inference of intention, "founded upon vague conjecture and circumstantial evidence." In other words, the result was a complete acquittal of the ministers of any such design. The documents had been examined, which, had any such design ever been in being, must have been pregnant with proof of its existence, and none such was found. The inference was obvious; but it was unfavourable to the views of the dominant party, and was therefore disallowed.

Mr. Coxe indeed asserts, that "documents have since become public, which were then strongly suspected by the Whigs, that place the fact of the ministry's guilt in so clear a light as to render them absolutely incontrovertible." What these important documents are, he does not inform us: they certainly are not to be found in any of the papers which he published as the authorities for his work. The only documents which can be supposed to have any tendency to prove the position he assumes, are the proofs of Harley's correspondence with the court of St. Germain's, preserved by Macpherson. These

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fall far short of proving the charge he advances. Harley's object is generally believed to have been merely to deceive the Pretender, and to provide for his own safety in the case of an event which he thought not improbable, although he had no intention of attempting to bring it about; such was the opinion even of the Jacobites themselves.* But even if he was sincere, the proof extends only to Harley; there is no pretence for associating the rest of the ministers with him in the accusation.

We have already shown the improbability of the two rival ministers ever embarking together in an attempt which required such perfect unanimity and such delicate management. We repeat, that, considering the jealousy with which they regarded each other, and the different objects they had in view, it is *a moral impossibility* that any design should have been formed by the whole cabinet to bring about the restoration of the Pretender.

This view is strengthened by the authority of Dr. Somerville; an historian, who, though strongly inclined to espouse the principles of the Whigs as a party, has not hesitated to censure the individuals of that party when their conduct has been at variance with their professions. "Like a band of spies," says this writer, "the ministers watched and dreaded each other. This internal discord was the safeguard and palladium of the protestant settlement.

* Memoirs of Berwick, vol. ii. p. 184.

Fortified by the sanctions of law, not one of them, whatever he thought or inclined, durst whisper a wish or drop a hint against it, because it would have furnished his internal enemy with the certain means of his destruction." *

If farther proof were wanting to exculpate the ministers as a body from the accusation of Jacobitism, it would be amply supplied in the intemperate recriminations which took place between them immediately the administration was dissolved. If they were conscious of a common guilt, the circumstances of that crime would at least be avoided by them in their mutual accusations. But the fact was directly the reverse. Oxford's first effort to revenge his overthrow was by an endeavour to fix an imputation of Jacobitism upon his rival. We have already seen him employing the pen of the celebrated Daniel De Foe in his service. This clever writer he had kept to himself, and he was still attached to his interests. Soon after Oxford's disgrace, De Foe published his "Secret History of the White Staff; being an account of affairs under the conduct of some late ministers, and of what might probably have happened if her majesty had not died." The object of this pamphlet is the entire vindication of the pamphleteer's patron from all connexion with the exiled family, and the transfer of the guilt to Bolingbroke and his adherents.

* History of the Reign of Queen Anne, p. 592.

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De Foe was by no means a timid writer: he gives with the most unhesitating confidence the conversations of the supposed conspirators, and details all the minute circumstances with as much particularity and fidelity as he observed in the narrative of Mrs. Veal's ghost-story. No man was a greater adept than De Foe in throwing an air of probability over an invention. Bolingbroke is represented as ardent in the Pretender's cause. Speaking of Oxford, he is made to say, "God d—n him! what has he ever done for us? Has he not fed us with good words and fine notions all along; told us it was not a time to enter upon the question, and that to mention anything of the Pretender would alarm the nation and break all the public measures? Has he done anything but made fools of us? I am satisfied he is a spy upon us for the house of Hanover: he is no more for the Pretender than he is for the Grand Seignior." *

This extract gives a sufficient specimen of the object of the pamphlet, and the style in which it was written. Oxford, when interrogated upon the subject, denied that it proceeded in any way from him; † but the author's name soon became known, and his connexion with the ex-minister was notorious. It did not remain long unanswered: the "Considerations upon the Secret History of the

* Secret History of the White Staff, in three parts. London, J. Baker, 1714.

† Letter from Dr. Arbuthnot to Mr. Ford, Oct. 19, 1714. —*Swift's Letters.*

White Staff,"* are generally attributed to Bolingbroke. This answer directly denies the charge, and retorts it upon the Earl of Oxford, to whom the pamphlet is "humbly addressed." Another answer appeared, with the title of "A Detection of the Sophistry and Falsities of the Pamphlet entitled The Secret History of the White Staff,"† containing a general defence of the ministers whom the original pamphlet had accused; and a third, called the "History of the Mitre and the Purse,"‡ which related chiefly to the conduct of Bishop Atterbury and Lord Harcourt. These answers drew forth in their turn several replies.

But the zeal of De Foe was not yet satisfied. His next production was an ingenious forgery, which has deceived several careful historians. In 1717, he published "Minutes of the Negotiations of Monsieur Mesnager at the Court of England towards the close of the last Reign; wherein some of the most secret transactions of that time relating to the interest of the Pretender, and a clandestine separate peace, are detected and laid open: written by himself; done out of French." This work had a similar object to that of the "White Staff:" it exculpated Oxford, and convicted Bolingbroke and his adherents. In it the conversation of the queen and Lady Masham are reported as confidently as those of the ministers had been before: and the favourite

* 8vo. London, Moore, (no date.)

† 8vo. London, J. Roberts, 1714.

‡ 8vo. London, J. Morphew, 1714.

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who had worked the downfal of De Foe's patron was made by him to bear an especial portion of the guilt. These Minutes, although no French edition of them had ever appeared, have been generally received as genuine. Dr. Somerville quotes them without suspicion, and many facts have been received upon their authority. Mr. Hallam,* with his usual acumen, has discovered internal evidence of their spurious character, and is the first modern author who has rejected them: but even he does not appear to have known that at the time of their appearance they were denounced as a forgery, and that the fact was so incontrovertible, that De Foe publicly denied that he was the author of them.† This denial was, however, estimated at its real value; — no one then doubted that they were a production of De Foe's.

These attempts by fabricated evidence to fix their rivals with the odium of the greatest crime a minister could then commit, are of themselves suf-

* Constitutional History, vol. iii. p. 301: 8vo edition.

† See Boyer's Political State, vol. xiii. p. 627.

Boyer was a Whig, and was himself suspected of being the author. He repels the charge with indignation, and proves to a demonstration that the work is a forgery. He makes it sufficiently clear that De Foe was the real author, and points out his object. This drew from De Foe a tolerably abusive answer, denying that he was the author; to which Boyer only replied, that "he should never descend so low as to enter the Billingsgate lists either with branded D. F. or any other scribbler of that stamp."—*Political State*, vol. xiv. p. 100.

ficient proof that there was no real evidence in existence. A review of all these circumstances;—the broken state of the ministry,—their jealousy of each other,—the difficulty and danger of the attempt,—the laudable watchfulness of the Whigs,—the severe scrutiny afterwards instituted,—the failure of that scrutiny to discover the proofs they sought,—the eagerness of the Tories, when in disgrace, to accuse each other, and even *their* failure to bring forward any genuine proof;—all these circumstances prove almost to a demonstration that there was no design entertained by the queen's ministers, as a body, to alter the succession as limited by parliament.

If, then, there is no ground for condemning the ministry collectively, we must have proof of delinquency against every individual before we pass so heavy a censure upon him. Neither Bolingbroke nor any of his coadjutors can be implicated by any evidence which exists only against Oxford. In that case, Bolingbroke must be acquitted of all suspicion. He has repeatedly and explicitly denied that he had ever at this time held any correspondence with the Pretender: there is no evidence whatever to contradict this denial; while there is strong negative evidence—the only species of evidence the circumstance admits of—corroborating it. We search in vain for any traces of such a correspondence in the voluminous records of the dark intrigues of the time. The letters of the cautious Harley are preserved; and those of every other man of note who engaged in

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these transactions survive to attest his perfidy. Is it likely, then—is it possible, that Bolingbroke, whose disposition savoured so strongly of rashness, should be the sole exception?—that he alone should have passed unknown through a defile in which so many more cautious politicians were discovered? The collection of Papers by Macpherson contains nothing against Bolingbroke; while they are pregnant with matter against every other public character who was suspected of favouring the Stuart cause.

The only paper in this collection which has been ever cited against him, is a letter from one of the Jacobite agents; who says, "Your friend Mr. Cary [Lockhart] writes to me from Porter's quarters [London], that he is in friendship with Mr. Bruce z f p p v o z ı n g y [Bolingbroke], and has lately had much freedom of conversation with him, by which he thinks Bruce [Bolingbroke] an honest man, and much in your uncle Frank's [the Pretender's] interest; but, at the same time, he thinks Bruce [Bolingbroke] is not altogether well with Mr. Gould's successor [Harley]; and by what Cary [Lockhart] draws from Bruce, he doubts of Gould's good intentions." *

This amounts only to a second-hand declaration of Lockhart, that he thought Bolingbroke was in the Pretender's interest; which is worth literally nothing, when we remember the character of the relator. Lockhart was a hot-headed Jacobite, who did not

* Macpherson, vol. ii. p. 367.

scruple to spread any report and to give any account which he thought favourable to the cause he had espoused. We find him, in his Memoirs, describing it as the most easy of undertakings to bring about a repeal of the act of settlement, and telling us that he had avowed his principles before the queen, who heard him with favour. It is singular that in these Memoirs the name of Bolingbroke does not once occur. It is inconceivable that the Pretender's agents should have made no farther mention of so illustrious a convert in any of their despatches, had he been so "honest" a man as James Forbes asserts upon the authority of Mr. Cary. This extract from Nairne is no evidence at all.

But whatever weight might be attached to this opinion of Lockhart, it cannot resist the direct evidence contained in the following circumstance, which is given from the Marchmont Papers. While the negotiations for the treaty of Utrecht were yet pending, the conferences of the Abbé Gaultier with the secretary were of course frequent. Upon one of these occasions Bolingbroke observed that the priest left a sealed letter directed to him upon his table. The letter bore the arms of England upon its seal; and Bolingbroke immediately suspecting from whom it came, called the abbé back and interrogated him. He confessed that the letter was written by the Pretender; upon which Bolingbroke returned it, with the admonition, that if he discovered him again to be the medium of any correspondence from that quarter,

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he should order him to quit the kingdom in twenty-four hours.

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With such evidence before us, even if we believe, upon the authority of the passage quoted from Macpherson, that some correspondence did pass between Bolingbroke and the Pretender's agents, it will be impossible to conclude that he ever, while minister, entertained any serious design in favour of that person. Viewing this fact in the severest manner, it only tends to argue, that when a doubtful contest was momentarily expected to commence, he felt inclined to secure some terms, in case, as was by no means improbable, the cause of the Stuarts should ultimately prove triumphant. This is, however, attaching to the report of Lockhart far more importance than it deserves.

But there is another quotation to be made from Macpherson, which is much more to the purpose than that already cited. It is given as an extract from Cartes' Memorandum Book.

"The design of L. B. [Lord Bolingbroke] at the time [May 1714] was to bring about the Hanover succession; and two or three days before the queen's death, L. L. and Sir W. Wyndham going in a coach together, the first said, 'Now they have got the power entirely into their hands, they might easily bring about a restoration:' to which Sir W. said, 'Put that out of your head; that will never be: —— is an impracticable man' (*i. e.* would not change his religion at that moment), 'and will never be brought in.' And

L. L. going on the Saturday evening (before the queen died) to Kensington, met Arthur Moore and John Drummond waiting for L. B. (who dined with Sir W. W. and a great deal of company that day at Blackheath), who did not come, though John was appointed to attend there for L. B., to receive his last instructions, in order to set out the next day for Hanover, to make up matters with that court. This John Drummond himself told L. L.; but the queen's death did not allow them time to execute their scheme, and they could never make the court believe they had any such schemes." *

This minute recapitulation of proofs would have been unnecessary, had not the confident tone in which Bolingbroke's guilt has been assumed by his enemies prevailed upon many authors to adopt their authority without suspicion or examination. From the historical records we possess, it may in fact be affirmed as certain, that Bolingbroke took no part in the intrigues which so many individuals carried on with the Pretender at the latter part of the queen's reign.

If this view of the case be correct, the only defence which the apologists of Stanhope and Walpole have set up in excuse for their extreme violence falls to the ground; and the prosecution of Bolingbroke must, upon their own statement, appear unjust and undeserved.

* Macpherson, vol. ii. p. 530.

CHAPTER XXI.

Bill of Attainder passed against Bolingbroke.—He joins the Pretender.

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UPON receiving the articles of impeachment, the lords ordered the accused nobleman to be attached; and upon the report of their officer that he had long since retired into France, they returned an answer to the commons to that effect. The commons, upon this message, immediately passed a bill, summoning him to render himself to justice by a certain day, and in default attainting him of high treason. This bill passed the lords, and received the royal assent;* and at the expiration of the time which it specified, Bolingbroke became degraded from his rank, attainted in blood, unable to inherit his family estates, and liable to suffer death if he should ever return to his native country.

The sum which prudence had induced him long ago to transmit to the Continent, and which he had invested in foreign securities, was very small, and the income to be derived from it was utterly insufficient to supply him with those luxuries which habit

* There was a strong protest entered against it in the lords.

had rendered necessary, and which Bolingbroke had never despised. He had laughed at Swift, when he affected to withdraw himself from the court, and to retire with pleasure to contentment and philosophy in the country; and experience proved him right. Bolingbroke, while harassed by the noise of contending factions, threatened with the persecution of a conquering party, and despairing of recovering the station he had once enjoyed, may, in a mood of despondency, have sighed also for quiet and retirement; but if he did, he forgot to apply to his own use the knowledge of mankind which enabled him to lecture others. The mind of Bolingbroke was never fashioned for repose: to him action was almost a necessary condition of his existence. If debarred from serving his country, he would attack her; and he persuaded himself that in following the dictates of his passion he was but striving to inflict a just punishment upon his enemies.

Bolingbroke's philosophy, although avowedly based upon that of the Stoics, partook largely of the Epicurean character; and a life of poverty and abstinence was sufficiently unpleasant to him to drive him upon any project which might promise to extricate him from it, and to place him again where his heart ever was—amid the storm and turmoil of political conflict. It is no proof, therefore, of his having when in power formed any design in favour of the Pretender, if he now felt more favourably disposed towards the cause of that person. No sooner had the

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fact of his self-expatriation become known at Bar, where the Chevalier then held his mimic court, than agents were despatched to solicit the aid of his powerful talents. It was rightly conjectured that the resentment arising from disappointed ambition would be too strong to contend with any abstract principle of attachment to a protestant sovereign, or any preconceived dislike for the family of the Stuarts. The Jacobites depended much upon his ambition, but more upon his desire of vengeance; and they tempted him with the most highly-wrought descriptions of the universal popularity of their cause, and the certainty of their ultimate success.

Bolingbroke's own observation had convinced him that these boastings were not entirely without foundation: he knew how numerous and how powerful was the Tory faction, how discontented the measures of the Whigs had already made them, and how desperate they would be rendered by the further mortifications their opponents seemed determined to inflict. Bolingbroke had been their leader; the Pretender's agents affected to believe that he was now their ambassador. They told him of a train laid throughout England and Scotland, which waited only their signal to explode beneath the throne of the Hanoverian usurper. The kingdoms were pledged to rise *en masse* at their bidding: the Chevalier was to place himself at their head; and Bolingbroke was invited to share his fortunes and his success.

The exiled minister knew that although there was much exaggeration in this statement, there was also some truth: but while a hope remained that he might be allowed to serve his country, he refused to contribute to its distraction. The endeavours of his agents were aided by a letter from the Pretender himself; and in the situation in which Bolingbroke then was, it argues no faint disinclination to the cause of the Pretender, that he absolutely refused to join his adherents, or even to answer the letter which that person addressed to him. Surely the man who, when his fortunes were desperate, refused to embark in such a cause, was not likely voluntarily to have embraced it when no advantage allured him, and danger and dishonour combined to repel him.

But when Bolingbroke refused the offer to become minister to this fictitious prince, he was not aware of the full extent of the persecution which he was about to undergo. The bill of attainder, although in preparation, was not yet a law; and he indulged a hope that the prudence if not the mercy of the new sovereign would interpose to prevent its completion. Experience had not even yet convinced him of the unrelenting malignity of his enemies, or the unhesitating compliance of their master. The power of parliament was exhausted against him; and Bolingbroke, when he heard that England had condemned him to death, resolved, with Alcibiades, to convince her that he was yet alive.

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The tie of patriotism he now considered to be entirely severed: his country contained nothing that he could call his; she had not only taken from him everything which she had bestowed, but had deprived him of all hope of retrieving that he had lost. His paternal property must pass from him to other hands, and he was deprived of the power of transmitting the title he had gained. To land upon his country's shores was death: a hopeless exile was the condition upon which alone he was suffered to exist. Thus cut off from every other connexion, Bolingbroke clung to that which during his political life he had never relaxed. He still continued the firm adherent of his party. Even when the dregs of ministerial wrath had been poured out upon himself, he remembered that he still owed a duty to his political friends. With the exception of the Earl of Oxford, their welfare was as dear to him as his own; and while a hope remained that their opponents would moderate or relent, he resolved to do no act that could furnish them an excuse for renewing or prosecuting their hostilities. The impeachment of the Duke of Ormond dissipated every lingering hope: the Tories then saw that war was declared against all,—against the more retired and little known, as well as the eminent and obnoxious. To keep terms any longer with such active and undisguised enemies, was no longer necessary, or even safe. Bolingbroke was relieved from any restraint, and was at liberty to act as he might deem his

own and his party's interest required. He admits that he considered himself their man, and that the friends he left behind him were the only persons who could determine him to any course of conduct. While their interest seemed to require concession, he remained loyal to the house of Hanover, and respectful to their government. He wrote a letter in his own justification to the secretary of state; refused all correspondence with the Pretender; and retired from Paris into Dauphiné, to obviate any suspicion which a residence in the capital might create or justify.

This conduct, which was the result of a party heroism happily unknown in these less violently factious days, was misrepresented by his enemies and misunderstood by his friends. His letter to the secretary was described as a fawning and contemptible submission; and his departure from Paris was cited as an abandonment of the Tory cause. Correspondence with him was difficult and dangerous; and even his most staunch political ally, Sir William Windham, could but rarely and darkly communicate to him the situation and views of their party. From these ambiguous despatches, however, the shrewd mind of Bolingbroke could catch the desperate condition of his partisans, and the object to which their wishes now tended. He was a Tory, but he was no Jacobite: he disdained to merit that title in order only to gain personal importance, but he would not hesitate if it were necessary to prove his

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fidelity to his party. In reply, therefore, to their occasional communications, he let them know that they had but to command him to ensure his obedience. "He was ready," he said, "to venture in their service the little which remained, as frankly as he had exposed all which was gone."

At last the party in England decided upon their proceedings, and Bolingbroke received immediate intimation of their resolves. This was in July. Bolingbroke was then upon the banks of the Rhone; and a confidential agent was despatched to communicate with him. He spoke in the name of all those friends with whom he had acted, and whose authority could influence him. He brought word that Scotland was not only ready to take arms, but was dissatisfied at being withheld from beginning. "In England," he said, "the people were exasperated against the government to such a degree, that, far from wanting to be encouraged, they could not be restrained from insulting it upon every occasion. The whole Tory party was become avowedly Jacobite: many officers of the army, and the majority of the soldiers, were well affected to the cause; the city of London was ready to rise, and the enterprises for seizing several places were ripe for execution." Bolingbroke demanded who was the leader of these mighty preparations, and the Duke of Ormond was the person named: inquiring again whether his grace acted alone, and if not, who were his council, he was told that most of the principal

Tories were in the scheme, and that the others were so disposed that there remained no doubt of their joining so soon as the first blow should be struck.

The agent had related his facts; he now pressed the immediate co-operation which was the object of his mission. He observed, that the Tories in England were not a little surprised to observe that their late leader should lie neuter in such a conjuncture. He represented the danger he ran of being prevented by people of all sides from having the merit of engaging early in this enterprise; and how unaccountable it would be for a man impeached and attainted under the present government, to take no share in bringing about a revolution so near at hand and so certain. He entreated, therefore, that Bolingbroke would defer no longer to join the Chevalier. The Jacobites at this time hoped to obtain important assistance from France to further their enterprise; and who could be so qualified to solicit that assistance as Bolingbroke, towards whom many of the ministers at that court entertained sentiments of friendship and admiration? The agent declared that this was the task which awaited him, and urged him to immediately undertake it. He concluded by giving him a letter from the Pretender, whom he had fallen in with in his way. This letter required him to repair without loss of time to Commercy; a summons that derived its confident tone from the message which the agent brought from England.

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Bolingbroke was dissatisfied that this man should have communicated the message to the Pretender before he had seen him, to whom he was first sent. But he had been eager to deliver the assurances he had received, and to pay his court to what he considered his future sovereign; and he probably considered that he should be able to perform his mission with better success, when he could inform the object of his journey that the Tories in England were already bound to the Chevalier, and that they had engaged for themselves and him.

Bolingbroke knew too well the instances of false confidence which had occurred among this party, to yield implicit credence to the tales which he had heard. He detained him for some time in conversation, to try the consistency and authority of his statements. In the progress of this conversation, he related a multitude of facts which satisfied him as to the general disposition of the people; but he gave him little satisfaction as to the measures taken for improving that disposition, for driving the business on with vigour if it tended to a revolution, or for supporting it with advantage if it extended into a war. When he put direct questions concerning several persons whose disinclination to the government admitted of no doubt, and whose names, quality, and experience were very essential to the success of the undertaking, it was owned that they kept a great reserve, and did at most but encourage others to act by general and dark expressions.

At the time this conference took place, Bolingbroke was confined to his bed, and therefore did not need an excuse to decline any immediate participation in so dangerous a scheme. That the enterprise was desperate, if not hopeless of success, he could discover from the admissions of his informant, and from the experience he himself had lately had of the absence of any unity of design in England. But, as he tells us, "the smart of a bill of attainder tingled in every vein," and his resentment prompted him to contemn dangers which could not escape his penetration. That feeling of party honour, which had regulated his conduct through life, tended to fix, if not to excuse, his resolution. He considered his party to be oppressed, and looking to him for assistance; and he could not endure the disgrace, after having participated in their prosperity, of refusing a post of danger to extricate them from their adversity. His high sense of honour told him also that his adherence, to be made gracefully, must be made immediately.

The Tories were already committed: every moment he delayed following their example, he furnished a presumption that he had abandoned their party. They were about to apply to France for succour: should that be granted before his determination was known, it might be said that he came to support a prosperous cause after refusing to assist it when it required his aid. He hoped, too, that when he came to confer upon the subject with the

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Chevalier, he should obtain more accurate intelligence than his agent could afford him. He could not conceive that, with no further hopes of support or assistance than those he had heard enumerated, he would attempt to kindle a war which, if suppressed, would effectually destroy all the resources of his house. He judged therefore that the gentleman with whom he conversed was not admitted into the more secret councils of his chief, and anticipated more particular disclosures when he should hear his plans from the Pretender himself.

With these expectations, and under these feelings, he accepted the task which had been allotted to him. As soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he set out for Commercy, and lost no time in openly declaring himself an adherent of the Chevalier. It is evident that he took this step with great reluctance: he hated alike the Pretender's principles, his person, and his old adherents. But against all these party spirit prevailed. The first interview he had with the Chevalier by no means removed the slight opinion he had formed of his resources, or realized the hopes he had entertained that the designs of that person were more sober and better digested than those of his adherents. Bolingbroke began already to see that he had entered into a dangerous and ungrateful service; and he already blamed the rashness which had identified the fortunes of his party with so hopeless a cause. Of the first conversation he held with the Chevalier, he says: "He

talked to me like a man who expected every moment to set out for England or Scotland, but who did not very well know for which: and when he entered into the particulars of his affairs, I found that concerning the former he had nothing more circumstantial nor positive to go upon than what I had already heard." *

All the advices which were received from England were couched in vague and general expressions of universal support; but no evidence of whence this support was so certainly to be obtained could be collected. The confidence of the parties might certainly be some proof of the truth of their assertions; and their readiness to take part in the execution of the decisive measures they proposed, was evidence of the sincerity with which those proposals were made. But then all their assertions were general, and their authority seldom satisfactory. The assurances of assistance which came from the most powerful persons were verbal, and often communicated by messengers whose veracity was but doubtful. Other advices came from parties whose fortunes were as desperate as their counsels; and others again from persons whose situation made their opinions and their assistance in such an affair alike valueless.

The great hope of the Jacobites rested upon France: without assistance from that quarter, they did not disguise from themselves that nothing could

* Letter to Sir William Windham.

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be done. But their great error consisted in never supposing it possible that France should fail them at their time of need. The Duke of Ormond had now the direction of all the Chevalier's affairs in England. Unlimited powers had been given him to command, negotiate, design, and even execute. Everything was entrusted to him except the means; without which his powers were as shadowy and unsubstantial as the royalty of the person he was attempting to serve. He applied for a small body of regular troops, some arms and ammunition, and some money. The conclave at Bar declared their utter incapacity to furnish any such assistance, and referred him to the court of Versailles. By France he was told that no troops whatever could be given him, but that he might count upon receiving some money and ammunition. A small sum of money was afterwards advanced; but the languidness of the aid showed that the French court had in view rather to prevent the extinction of the party, and to preserve it as a machine of future annoyance, than to second them in any vigorous effort to place their chief upon the throne.

Under these circumstances, to proceed openly in an attempt to bring about a restoration without any means of resisting the storm they were raising, was a madness which nothing but the intemperate resentment of the Tories could have betrayed them into. Yet such was their conduct. Without hope

of effectual aid from France, with no hope at all from the Pretender, they went on sounding the tocsin through the kingdom, awakening all the vigilance of a watchful government, and giving a publicity to their designs which would have enabled the minister to counteract any attempt, although made with all the resources, of which they were destitute.

Scotland, however, was in a state of readiness: that, if the same spirit had at all extended to England, would have succeeded in producing the revolution which was projected. The rising then must have been simultaneous and complete; and the fortunes of Bolingbroke might have risen upon the ruin of his country's liberties. But as their eagerness was met with little corresponding ardour in England, their forwardness was rather a weakness than otherwise. They were even less discreet in concealing their intentions than their friends in England; but they were better prepared to execute them. They had concerted every measure necessary for the commencement of the rebellion, and wanted only the presence of their leader to rise in arms. Their remonstrances upon his procrastination were rather energetic than respectful; and the Chevalier, overcome by their earnestness, was now about to embark in an adventure in which the odds were fearfully against him.

This Bolingbroke strongly opposed. He represented

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the absolute necessity of assistance from France, and declared that without it all hope of success was wild and chimerical. He described what he knew to be the state of parties in England; that the Jacobites, as a party, were a most contemptible minority; that nothing but the violence of the Whigs had produced the loud declarations of dissatisfaction, which the Chevalier counted upon as decisive declarations in his favour; that this dissatisfaction was rather loud than dangerous, and few even of the most noisy would be drawn to risk their lives and fortunes for a prince whose claims and person were alike indifferent to them, unless they saw such a certainty of success that they could depend upon sharing the favours he would soon have to bestow. After events proved that Bolingbroke was right. The old incomprehensible principle of mere instinctive loyalty, which no crimes could eradicate and no worthlessness could startle,— which had threatened England with the imposition of an absolute monarchy, and had enabled the houses of York and Lancaster to spill her blood in quarrels where she was the chief sufferer,—had long lost all its force in England; and, if it still retained its pristine vigour in Scotland, it was chiefly in those fastnesses where the ties of chieftain and clansman had served to cherish the old feudal feeling, and to degrade the reasonable affection of men to the blind fidelity of the brute. The Stuarts had counted upon the support of this loyalty long after

its influence had vanished,—or rather, after its character had changed. Their punishment proved the magnitude of their error; but even the misfortunes it had entailed could not induce them to relinquish a conviction so flattering to their pride and so favourable to their absolute pretensions.

CHAPTER XXII.

Bolingbroke accepts the Office of Secretary of State under the Pretender.—His Mission to the Court of Versailles.

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THE advice of Bolingbroke was in this instance followed. The impatience of the clans was restrained; and it was determined to make every effort to obtain effectual assistance from France. As a reward for his present services, and as an inducement to future efforts, Bolingbroke was invested with the office of secretary of state to the fictitious King of England; an office which he accepted with much hesitation, and doubtless with feelings of degradation and contempt. In accepting the seals, as he somewhat ludicrously terms this mock installation, he made it a condition that he should be at liberty to quit a station which his humour—and, as he says, many other considerations—made him think himself very unfit for, whenever the occasion for which he was engaged was over one way or other.

After this honourable office had been thus bestowed upon him, and had been thus somewhat ungraciously received, he was despatched upon the embassy upon which all hope of success to the cause

he had undertaken rested. At his own request, he was instructed to draw up and deliver a plan of the whole design, a particular specification of the succours desired, the time when and the place where they should be delivered. But he entered upon his task with that lassitude and indifference which men must always feel when they are engaged in a cause, not only desperate in its nature, but foreign to their wishes, and little in accordance with their principles.

However, Bolingbroke had accepted the office, and he addressed himself to the fulfilment of his duties. He arrived in Paris about the end of the month, avowedly for the purpose of obtaining French troops to invade his native country. How different must have been his feelings upon entering the French capital this time, to those which he had experienced on a former occasion—then the minister of a powerful sovereign, backed by all the power of England, secure in the favour of his mistress and popular with her subjects, come to decide the most momentous interests of a mighty kingdom, and banishing by his presence the impotent pretender to its throne. Now he entered that city the servant of the adventurer who had then fled at his approach, decked with the tawdry title of minister to the puppet of his country's enemy, in a character which his personal qualities alone could redeem from derision and contempt.

The humiliating contrast must have struck him forcibly as he entered upon the object of his mission:

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and other thoughts, of forfeited rank, lost fortune, and attainted blood, may have mingled in his musings with the reception he had before received, and the dignity and power he had once enjoyed. There is a bitter pleasantry in his relation of this his second diplomatic visit to the French court, which marks his disgust for the employment he had undertaken, and shows that his thoughts were busily employed in reflections upon what he had been and what he then was. We have little other authority than his own for the secret events which transpired during this residence; and since he had little inducement to conceal or magnify the facts, we may allow him to relate them in his own words.

"All I was charged with, and by consequence all I am answerable for, was to solicit the French court, and to dispose them to grant us the succours necessary to make the attempt as soon as we should know certainly from England in what it was desired that these succours should consist, and whither they should be sent. Here I found a multitude of people at work, and every one doing what seemed good in his own eyes,—no subordination, no order, no concert. Persons concerned in the management of these affairs upon former occasions have assured me this is always the case: it might be so to some degree, but I believe never so much as now. The Jacobites had wrought one another up to look upon the success of the present designs as infallible: every meeting-house which the populace demolished, every

little drunken riot which happened, served to confirm them in these sanguine expectations; and there was hardly one amongst them who would lose the air of contributing by his intrigues to the restoration, which he took for granted would be brought about without him in a very few weeks.

"Care and hope sat on every busy Irish face. Those who could write and read, had letters to show; and those who had not arrived to this pitch of erudition, had their secrets to whisper. Fanny Oglethorpe, whom you must have seen in England, kept her corner in it; and Olive Trant was the great wheel of our machine.

"I imagine that this picture, the lines of which are not in the least too strong, would serve to represent what passed on your side of the water at the same time. The letters which came from thence seemed to me to contain rather such things as the writers wished might be true, than such as they knew to be so: and the accounts which were sent from hence were of the same kind. The vanity of some and the credulity of others supported this ridiculous correspondence; and I question not but very many persons—some such I have known—did the same thing from a principle which they took to be a very wise one. They imagined that they helped by these means to increase the spirit of party in England and France. They acted like Thaos, that turbulent Ætolian, who brought Antiochus into Greece: 'Quibus mendaciis de rege,

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multiplicando verbis copias ejus, erexerat multorum in Grecia animos: iisdem et regis spem inflabat, omnium votis eum arcessi.' Thus were numbers of people employed, under a notion of advancing the business or from an affectation of importance, in amusing and flattering one another, and in sounding the alarm in the ears of the enemy, whom it was their interest to surprise. The government of England was put on its guard; and the necessity of acting, or of laying aside with some disadvantage all thoughts of acting for the present, was precipitated before any measures necessary to enable you to act had been prepared or almost thought of.

" If his majesty did not till some short time after this declare the intended invasion to parliament, it was not for want of information. Before I came to Paris, what was going on had been discovered. The little armament made at the Havre, which furnished the only means the Chevalier then had for his transportation into Britain, which had exhausted the treasury of St. Germain's, and which contained all the arms and ammunition that could be depended upon for the whole undertaking, though they were hardly sufficient to begin the work even in Scotland, was talked of publicly. A minister less alert and less capable than the Earl of Stair would easily have been at the bottom of the secret,—for so it was called, when the particulars of messages received and sent, the names of the persons from whom they

came and by whom they were carried, were whispered about at tea-tables and in coffee-houses.

"In short, what by the indiscretion of the people here, what by the rebound which came often back from London, what by the private interest and ambitious views of persons in the French court, and what by other causes unnecessary to be examined now, the most private transactions came to light; and they who imagined that they trusted their heads to the keeping of one or two heads, were in reality at the mercy of numbers. Into such company was I fallen for my sins.

"I had made very little progress in the business which brought me to Paris, when the paper so long expected was sent, in pursuance of former instances, from England. The unanimous sense of the principal persons engaged was contained in it: the whole had been dictated word for word to the gentleman who brought it over by the Earl of Mar: and it had been delivered to him by the Duke of Ormond. I was driving in the wide ocean without a compass when this dropped unexpectedly into my hands; I received it joyfully, and I steered my course exactly by it. Whether the persons from whom it came pursued the principles and observed the rules which they laid down as the measurer of their own conduct and of ours, will appear by the sequel.

"This memorial asserted, that there were no

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hopes of succeeding in a present undertaking, for many reasons deduced in it, without an immediate and universal rising of the people in all parts of England upon the Chevalier's arrival; and that this insurrection was by no means probable, unless he brought a body of regular troops with him. That if this attempt miscarried, his cause and his friends, the English liberty and government, would be utterly ruined; but if by coming without troops he resolved to risk these and everything else, he must set out so as not to arrive before the end of September: to justify which opinion many arguments were urged. In this case, twenty thousand arms, a train of artillery, five hundred officers with their servants, and a considerable sum of money, was demanded: and as soon as they should be informed that the Chevalier was in a condition to make this provision, it was said that notice should be given him of the places to which he might send, and to the persons who were to be trusted. I do not mention some inconveniences which they touched upon arising from a delay, because their opinion was clearly for this delay, and because that they could not suppose that the Chevalier would act, or that those about him would advise him to act, contrary to the advice of his friends in England. No time was lost in making the proper use of this paper: as much of it as was fit to be shown in this court, was translated into French and laid before the King of France. I was now able to speak with greater assurance, and in

some sort to undertake conditionally for the event of things.

"The proposal of violating treaties so lately and so solemnly concluded, was a very bold one to be made to people, whatever their inclinations might be, whom the war had reduced to the lowest ebb of riches and power. They would not hear of a direct and open engagement, such as the sending of a body of troops would have been; neither would they grant the whole of what was asked in the second plan. But it was impossible for them or any one else to foresee how far those steps which they were willing to take, well improved, might have encouraged or forced them to go. They granted us some succours; and the very ship in which the Pretender was to transport himself was fitted out by Depine D'Anicant, at the King of France's expense. They would have concealed these appearances as much as they could; but the heat of the Whigs and the resentment of the court of England might have drawn them in. We should have been glad indirectly to concur in fixing these things upon them;—and, in a word, if the late king had lived six months longer, I verily believe there had been war again between England and France. This was the only point of time when these affairs had, to my apprehension, the least reasonable appearance even of possibility: all that preceded was wild and uncertain, all that followed was mad and desperate. But this favourable aspect had an extreme short

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duration. Two events soon happened, one of which cast a damp on all we are doing, and the other rendered vain and fruitless all we had done;—the first was the arrival of the Duke of Ormond in France, the other was the death of the king.

"When I arrived at Paris, the king was already gone to Marly, where the indisposition which he had begun to feel at Versailles increased upon him. He was the best friend the Chevalier had; and when I engaged in this business my principal dependence was upon his personal character: this failed me in a great degree — he was not in a condition to exert the same vigour as formerly. The ministers, who saw so great an event as his death to be probably at hand,—a certain minority, an uncertain regency, perhaps confusion at best—a new face of government and a new system of affairs,—would not for their own sakes, as well as for the sake of the public, venture to engage far in any new measures. All I had to negotiate—by myself first, and in conjunction with the Duke of Ormond soon afterwards—languished with the king. My hopes sunk as he declined, and died when he expired. The event of things has sufficiently shown that all those which were entertained by the duke and the Jacobite party under the regency were founded on the grossest delusions imaginable. Thus was the project become impracticable before the time arrived which was fixed by those who directed things in England for putting it in execution.

"The new government of France appeared to me like a strange country: I was little acquainted with the roads; most of the faces I met with were unknown to me, and I hardly understood the language of the people. Of the men who had been in power under the late reign, many were discarded, and most of the others were too much taken up with the thoughts of securing themselves under this, to receive applications in favour of the Pretender. The two men who had the greatest appearance of favour and power, were D'Aguesseu and Noailles. One was made chancellor on the death of Voisin, from attorney-general; and the other was placed at the head of the treasury. The first passes for a man of parts, but he never acted out of the sphere of the law. I had no acquaintance with him before this time; and when you consider his circumstances and mine, you will not think it could be very easy for me to get access to him now. The latter I had known extremely well while the late king lived; and, from the same court principle that he was glad to be well with me then, he would hardly know me now. The minister who had the principal direction of foreign affairs* I lived in friendship with; and I must own to his honour, that he never encouraged a design which he knew his court had no intention of supporting.

"There were other persons—not to tire you with further particulars upon this head—of credit and in-

* M. De Huxelles.

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fluence, with whom I found indirect and private ways of conversing; but it was in vain to expect any more than civil language from them, in a case which they found no disposition in their master to countenance, and in favour of which they had no prejudices of their own. The private engagements into which the Duke of Orleans had entered with his majesty during the life of the late king, will abate of their force as the regent grows into strength, and would soon have had no force at all if the Pretender had met with success; but in these beginnings they operated very strongly. The air of this court was to take the counterpart of all which had been thought right under Louis XIV.: *Cela ressemble trop à l'ancien système*, was an answer so often given that it became a jest and almost a proverb. But to finish this account with a fact which is incredible, but strictly true:—the very peace which had saved France from ruin, and the makers of it, had become as unpopular at this court as at the court of Vienna.

"The Duke of Ormond flattered himself in this state of things that he had opened a private and sure channel of arriving at the regent, and of bending him to his purposes. His grace and I lived together at the time in a house which one of my friends had lent me: I observed that he was frequently lost, and he made continual excursions out of town with all the mysterious precaution imaginable. I doubted at first whether these intrigues related to business or pleasure; I soon discovered

with whom they were carried on, and had reason to believe that both were mingled in them. It is necessary that I explain the secret to you.

"Mrs. Trant,* whom I have named above, had been preparing herself for the retired abstemious life of a Carmelite by taking a surfeit of the pleasures of Paris; when, a little before the death of the queen, or about that time, she went into England. What she was entrusted either by the Chevalier or any other person to negotiate there I am ignorant of, and it imports not much to know. In that journey she made or renewed an acquaintance with the Duke of Ormond. The scandalous chronicle affirms, that she brought with her, when she returned into France, a woman of whom I have not the least knowledge, but who was probably handsome, since without beauty such a merchandize would not have been saleable, nor have answered the design of the importer; and that she made this way her court to the regent. Whatever her merit was, she kept a correspondence with him, and put herself upon that foot of a familiarity which he permits all those who contribute to his pleasures to assume. She was placed by him, as she told me herself when I found her some time after that which I am speaking of, in the house of an ancient gentlewoman who had formerly

* She used to pretend a resolution of turning nun. She afterwards married the Duke of Bouillon's brother, who was too much dishonoured by his former life to be so even by this scandalous match.

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been maid of honour to Madame, and who had contracted at court a spirit of intrigue which accompanied her in her retreat.

"These two had associated to them the Abbé de Jesieu in all the political part of their business,—for I will not suppose that so reverend an ecclesiastic entered into any other secret. This abbé is the regent's secretary; and it was chiefly through him that the private treaty had been carried on between his master and the Earl of Stair in the king's reign. Whether the priest had stooped at the lure of a cardinal's hat, or whether he acted the second part by the same order that he acted the first, I know not: this is sure—and the British minister was not the bubble of it,—that whilst he concerted measures on one hand to traverse the Pretender's designs, he testified on the other all the inclination possible for his service. A mad fellow who had been an intendant in Normandy, and several other politicians of the lowest form, were at different times taken into this famous junto.

"With these worthy people his Grace of Ormond negotiated: and no care was omitted on his part to keep me out of the secret; the reason of which, as far as I am able to guess at, shall be explained to you by and by. I might very justly have taken this proceeding ill; and the duke will not be able to find in my whole conduct towards him anything like it. I protest to you very sincerely I was not in the least moved by it.

"He advanced not a step in this business with these sham ministers, and yet imagined that he got daily ground: I made no progress with the true one, but I saw it. These, however, were not our only difficulties: we lay under another, which came from your side, and which embarrassed us more. The first hindered us from working forward to our point of view; the second took all point of view from us.

"A paper was sent into England just before the death of the King of France, which had been drawn by me at Chaville, in concert with the Dukes of Ormond and Berwick, and with M. de Torcy. This paper was an answer to the memorial received from thence. The state of this country was truly represented in it: the difference was fixed between what had been asked and what might be expected from France; and upon the whole it was demanded what our friends would do, and what they would have us to do. The reply to this came through the French secretary of state to our hands. They declared themselves unable to say anything till they should see what turn affairs would take on so great an event as the death of the king, the report of which had reached them.

"Such a declaration shut our mouths and tied our hands. I confess I knew neither how to solicit, nor what to solicit; this last message suspending the project on which we had acted before, and which I kept as an instruction constantly before my eyes.

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It seemed to me uncertain whether you intended to go on, or whether your design was to stifle as much as possible all past transactions—to be perfectly still, to throw upon the court the odium of having given a false alarm, and to wait till new accidents at home and a more favourable conjuncture abroad might tempt you to resume the enterprise. Perhaps this would have been the wisest game you could have played: but then you should have concerted it with us who acted for you here. You intended no such thing, as appeared afterwards; and therefore those who acted for the party in London, whoever they were, must be deemed inexcusable for leaving things on the foot of this message, and giving us no advice fit to be depended upon for many weeks. Whilst preparations were to be made, and the work was to be set a-going by assistance from hence, you might reasonably expect to hear from us; but when all hopes of this kind seemed to be gone, it was your part to determine us, and we could take no resolution here but that of conforming ourselves to whatever should come prescribed from England."*

Such is the tone in which Bolingbroke describes the early events of his second residence at the French capital. In the account he has given us of his conduct, he asserts no partiality for the cause he had undertaken; he takes no credit for attaching himself to a desperate cause and an exiled prince; he

* Letter to Sir William Windham.

lays no claim to praise for a devotedness of loyalty which must often excite our sympathy, although we cannot award it our approbation. The brilliancy of his talents might have lent brightness to the basest cause; those talents exerted in the cause of misfortune might have invested him with a character of chivalrous heroism: but while it rendered his career and character more glittering, it must have detracted from that steady sterling sense that was the substratum of the showy parts which dazzled and amazed. The motive of his conduct was the advantage of his party; that motive he fearlessly acknowledged and fearlessly pursued.

The man who sought to build his fortunes upon those of the Pretender would certainly have abandoned the project when his circumstances had arrived at the ebb at which we have just seen Bolingbroke describe them to be. If his hopes were placed upon his success, he would be anxious to accelerate the attempt. But Bolingbroke was not: he looked only to his party in England for instructions; and he sufficiently intimates that if they had thought it right to abandon his cause, and to disappoint the anticipations of the ministry, they would have found in him a willing coadjutor. Nor in this was his conduct open to the accusation of treachery or unfaithfulness. He had avowed to the person he was serving, as explicitly as the temper of that person would allow him to do, that he was a Tory, not a Jacobite. Until the Tories declared for a resto-

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ration, Bolingbroke had been deaf to all his proposals; and he joined him at last at their command, and served him under their auspices. How far such a devotedness to a faction is praiseworthy, or even justifiable, it is unnecessary here to examine: sufficient for our present purpose that it existed, and that it prompted him to undertake, and sustained him in the prosecution of, an ungrateful and arduous office.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Distracted State of the Pretender's Counsels.—Insurrection in Scotland resolved upon—Opposed by Bolingbroke—Its Issue. —Intrigues at the French Court.—Bolingbroke's Dismissal from his Office of Secretary.

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THE condition in which he and the partisans of the Pretender now were, was sufficiently desperate; with nothing to hope for from France; with no intelligence from England; acting each by different instruments, and intent rather to conceal their actions from each other than to advance their common cause. This state of uncertainty was rendered yet more distracted by the wild designs of some of the frenzied Jacobites, who thought an effort only wanting to ensure the assistance of Heaven for its success. The sagacity of Bolingbroke alone had already prevented the success of one of these attempts, which would probably have ended in the extirpation of the whole party. While he was engaged in the negotiations at Paris, a monk arrived at Bar, representing himself as a messenger from the Duke of Ormond. He gave a circumstantial account of interviews he had had with that nobleman, and

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declared that by his instructions he had come to urge the immediate departure of the Chevalier for his kingdom. All things, he said, were prepared; the people were ready to rise in his behalf, and waited only his arrival to place the crown upon his head. So confidently was this account given, and so circumstantial was it in all its details, that a resolution was immediately taken at Bar to set out for Britain, and Bolingbroke had named the time and place of joining the Chevalier and taking part in the intended expedition. Had he fulfilled his intention, it is probable that the history of Bolingbroke would have closed here: the axe might have terminated his career before he had tarnished the lustre of his intellect by those darker spots which have dimmed it in the eyes of posterity. But the practised mind of the ex-secretary discovered something suspicious in the manner of the communication, and much that was surprising in the matter. The messenger was sent for from Bar to Paris, and quickly discovered into what different hands he had fallen. Bolingbroke soon discovered and obliged him to confess that the message was fictitious; that the design of an immediate attempt was unknown to the duke, and was prompted only by the sanguine frenzy of the monk himself. Immediately after, Ormond himself arrived in France, and sufficiently confirmed this confession.

Such an event was a lesson of caution which Bolingbroke, while he mingled in these transactions,

never forgot; and the verbal messages and unauthenticated reports which he now received, he treated with the contempt which the issue showed that they deserved. He founded his rule of conduct upon the less fallible dictates of his reason, which sufficiently told him, that if, when the government were lulled in security,—if, when they had no fleet at sea, no armies upon the coast, and not above eight thousand troops throughout the island,—if it was then a rash and hopeless enterprise to attempt to shake the Hanoverian from his throne without the strenuous assistance of France, madness itself could hardly entertain the idea of such an attempt when vigilance had been aroused, preparations had been made, the scheme had been discovered, and all assistance from the great source of all their hope was worse than questionable —was hopeless.

His conduct now was that which prudence recommended, and that which his motives in entering upon the service he was engaged in enforced. He resolved to remain passive until he had certain instructions from England, and until he was assured by those instructions what the Tories there intended to do, and what they expected from their friends abroad; to proceed no further than to employ the slender resources that remained in his hands to prevent the complete extinction of the flame, which he knew not yet how to apply.

Even in this he was not only unassisted, but was even opposed, by the French. Some arms which had

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been embarked on board transports, which he had provided, and which were intended to keep alive the expectations of the Pretender's friends, were, at the instance of the English admiral, Sir George Byng, disembarked and placed in the royal magazines: a confiscation which declared that France was scrupulous not to risk the friendship of England for the sake of advancing the fortunes of her enemy.

Notwithstanding all this, the senseless confidence of the Jacobites rather increased than diminished. A messenger arrived from Scotland to ask the Chevalier whether he would have the insurrection made immediately; and to represent to him, that if it was delayed much longer, it probably would not be made at all. To represent the true state of affairs would be to quench the very embers of the expiring fire. He was told that the Chevalier waited only for advices from England to issue instructions for an immediate insurrection. As soon as measures could be so concerted between his friends in both countries, so that when the attempt was made it might be made simultaneously and distract the attention of the government, no delay should intervene between its practicability and its accomplishment. If it were possible, he was instructed, the Scots should remain until England was ready to join them; but if they were so pressed that they must either resist or submit, the Chevalier said, let them rise immediately, and he would make the best of his way to them.

It was not difficult for Bolingbroke to foresee

what must be the result of this message, and that the impatience of the Scots would embrace the most violent alternative. Having done everything in his power to promote a scheme in which success might be probable, he now endeavoured to prevent one in which failure was certain. The Earl of Mar was, since the departure of the Duke of Ormond,* the leader of the Jacobite party in England. To him Bolingbroke despatched a messenger, to represent that he knew it to be his and his party's opinion that Scotland could do nothing without England, and that England would not stir without assistance from abroad. He now declared to him that no such assistance could be depended upon, and left the earl to make the inference. The messenger arrived in London, but the earl was already gone: the irrevocable step had been taken, and Mar was in the Highlands already at the head of the clans. Bolingbroke's message was confided to Mr. Erasmus Lewis, a stanch adherent of the Earl of Oxford; he promised to transmit it to the now outlawed insurgent chief; and this ineffectual warning was all that Bolingbroke could do to arrest the ruin of the cause in which he was embarked, and, what affected him much more, the ruin of his friends who were involved in that cause.

He had done all in his power to prevent this rash step; he now exerted himself to the utmost to falsify

* He had followed the example of Bolingbroke, and fled from England when threatened with an impeachment.

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the predictions he had given. While counsel could avail, he was cautious and timid; now that it was necessary to act, he was confident and impetuous. His energetic and manly deportment now reassured those whom his former objections had made to hesitate and doubt. When the moment was come for decision, the spirits of the Chevalier himself seemed to flag; and Bolingbroke, who had before attempted in vain to restrain his ardour, was assiduous to inspire him with confidence. He took a prominent part in preparing the plan of the expedition, and applied to the best purpose the slender means that were at hand for giving it some chances of success. He despatched an active emissary of the Jacobites,* who for fear of accident got his instructions by heart, to learn the state of things in England: he was to lay open to the conspirators there the real state of affairs, the destitution of the Chevalier, and the absence of all foreign succour; and he was to concert with them whether his presence would be more useful to the cause in England or in Scotland. The Pretender held himself ready to set out immediately he should receive an answer to this communication, and was determined to abide by the advice his friends in England should give him.

The answer was not long delayed. The messenger had an interview with the Earl of Lansdowne, who declared for the Jacobites in England that they were ready to rise immediately, and that, since

* Mr. Ezechiel Hamilton.

affairs were rather retrograding than progressing, the enterprise should not be a moment delayed. Bolingbroke had received intimation which led him to suspect that the French ministry were dealing treacherously with him, and had communicated to the English government despatches which they had undertaken to convey to the friends of the Pretender. This information he had transmitted to the parties more immediately interested; and it is probable that the supposition that they were already known to the government as agents in the rebellion which was so openly preparing, formed a powerful stimulant to their immediate declaration. It was represented that the western counties were ready, so soon as the Pretender should make his appearance, to rally around him: his person would there, it was said, be as safe as in Scotland; it would stimulate those to action who would otherwise hesitate to declare themselves, and it would tend in many other respects to secure the unity and energy of his friends. To this advice was added a general direction that the place of his landing should be as near to Plymouth as possible; an expression which alone shows how uncertain and indefinite were all their plans.

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However discouraging the prospect before him, the Pretender resolved to respond to the call. True, the invitation he had received was vague and unsatisfactory; he carried with him no troops to guard him upon his landing; he had not sufficient

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force to protect himself even against the attempt of any private person who might be animated by a desire to obtain the reward offered for his apprehension: but a kingdom was the prize to be striven for, and the splendour of the reward eclipsed the dangers of the attempt. Persons were despatched to the North of England, to signify the resolution which had been taken, and to declare that the South was already in arms: others were sent before to London, to apprise their friends there, that their king was on his way to place himself among them. The Pretender at the same time set out from Bar, and the Duke of Ormond from Paris. All things were at length prepared for the decisive event.

But now it was that the uselessness of general assertions became manifest. All were declared ready to rise, yet no single town had resolved upon the measures which alone could render such an event certain. The whole country gave signs of disaffection, but scarcely any means had been adopted to concert those minute circumstances necessary to give power and direction to the feeling. The predictions of his secretary were verified; the ardour of the Chevalier's hope was equalled by the depth of his despondency. He had seen in the distance an enchanting vision of splendour and royalty; it was not until he attempted to grasp it that he found it was but a phantom. When he arrived in Britanny, he was met by the Duke of Ormond, who had already to recount misfortunes. No sooner had the

duke reached the coast, than he received intelligence that the most considerable of his friends were already seized, and the government fully apprized of his designs. The messenger who brought this account told him that the party was in the utmost consternation, their leaders dispersed, and despair upon every countenance. The firmness of the duke prompted him to fulfil the scheme entrusted to him: he embarked for and landed upon the western coast; but no acclamations greeted him, no multitudes thronged to his standard. In the midst of the county said to be so well affected to his cause, and which had been so industriously prepared for his reception, he was so far from obtaining any encouragement or any hope of success, that he was even refused a night's lodging; and his friends, who had explored the coast and now joined him, declared that there was not the slightest symptom of any movement throughout those parts of the county which they had traversed. The duke had no other course to pursue than to return. He steered for the coast of Britanny, where he found the Chevalier ready to embark, and stopped him by the account he gave of the state of the cause.

Scotland, however, was in arms, and some hope yet remained. The Chevalier resolved to put himself at the head of his adherents there, and make one effort for his kingdom. The result is well known: after performing some idle mimicries at Perth, he was obliged to fly precipitately at the approach of

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the Earl of Argyle, and embarking at Montrose, was glad to betake himself again to the friendly protection of a French town. His friends were led as prisoners in triumph to London; and every other large place where the sedition had showed itself could boast its petty procession of fettered Jacobites: of these some were executed, some suffered banishment, others languished long in the prisons throughout the country, and others, by their impunity, testified the weakness of their cause and the contempt of the government.

It was no fault of Bolingbroke that he was not personally engaged in this adventure. We have seen him upon the near execution of a former project about to share in all the dangers of the enterprise; and his was not a disposition to remain inactive while others were in the field. But the interests of the party now required his presence in Paris. In the event of any success attending the first burst of insurrection, it would be of the utmost importance to have a man of talent and reputation upon the spot. When any chance of success occurred, the French might become more manageable; and seasonable succours might possibly be obtained to prosecute an advantage, or give a finishing stroke to the attempt. This disposition of his talents was judicious; but fortune never gave him an opportunity of exerting them to advantage. The secret negotiations, which had been concealed from him so industriously, and which had been beheld by him

with such indifference, lost their agents, who were called off by the expedition. Their prosecution was now therefore forwardly thrust upon him.

A little house in the Bois de Boulogne had been the scene of these intrigues. It was the residence of Mademoiselle de Chaussery, the superannuated maid of honour who has been before mentioned. This veteran *intrigante*, and the no less experienced Olive Trant, were the actors in the mysterious drama. When Bolingbroke, in obedience to their summons, attended them at this place, they opened to him the intrigues which Ormond had been carrying on: they told him of the hopes they had of drawing the regent into their schemes, and convinced him, by proofs which he could not disbelieve, that they had access to and credit with that person. Bolingbroke had long been trying in vain to make any impression by fair and open application; he now determined to try the effect of a more tortuous course. He remembered the court of Anne, and the all-powerful influence which intrigue and favouritism had there possessed; and these reminiscences made him now, as his ambition did then, stoop to conciliate instruments whom in his heart he loathed.

Favoured by these worthies, he met with smoother language and greater hopes than had hitherto been extended to him. Some ambiguous communications were even received from the regent; an interview was obtained for one of the Pretender's agents;—a

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faint hope was again raised, and Bolingbroke strove hard to ripen it to a reality: but fair words and faint promises were all that could be obtained, and he found himself as far from his object at the end as he had been at the commencement of this intrigue.

With a connexion at once so humiliating and so fruitless Bolingbroke was soon sufficiently disgusted: he began to manifest an impatience which astonished his female coadjutors. They told him that the regent had entertained personal prejudices against him, and that it was only by degrees that they could be removed. Bolingbroke was conscious of no offence which could have produced such a dislike, and he doubted its existence. It proved, he thought, that these women were amusing him only with empty promises, and indulging their vanity—perhaps their cupidity—at his expense. He declared that he would pursue the affair no further, and desired them to explain the reasons of the personal dislike which they said the regent entertained towards him. He was readily answered, that he was said to be in correspondence with the Earl of Stair, the British minister, and had been seen coming out of his house so late as three in the morning. This had been reported to the regent, who looked upon him as too dangerous a man to be trusted with secrets which might involve the peace of his kingdom.

This was a fact upon which Bolingbroke could proceed. He immediately sent the Marshal of Berwick to the regent, to express his concern that he

should labour under his displeasure, and to desire to know in what he had offended. The marshal was instructed to add, that a story, which it was said the regent believed, had been related to him; that he expected the justice which he could deny to no man, of having the accusation proved,—in which case, he said, he was contented to pass for the last of human kind, or of being justified if it could not be proved. The regent admitted that such a story had been related to him, and he had believed it; but he had since discovered that it was false, and that Bolingbroke might rest satisfied of his regard. He added, that he was certainly displeased that he who could apply to him through his foreign secretary should choose to make his communications through Mrs. Trant. In an interview which soon after took place, he repeated the same sentiments; he complained that Trant and her cabal teazed him to death, and spoke of them in no measured terms. Bolingbroke left him with but slender hopes of bringing him to second his views, but with the satisfaction of having received from himself an order to hold no more communication with his patronesses in the Bois de Boulogne.

This conduct seems to have been in accordance with the general character of the Duke of Orleans. With all the politeness of his nation, he united a firmness of purpose which would not allow his conduct to be swayed by petty intrigue. His love of pleasure and his dislike to give a positive refusal

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prompted him to allow the importunities of his female cabal: but what his indolence promised, his firmness restrained him from performing. His character in this respect was not essentially different from that of Bolingbroke: both were endowed with brilliant parts, and both led debauched lives; yet by neither were the connexions into which their licentiousness led them, suffered to interfere with their measures of state.*

Bolingbroke found that all hope from France was gone; he applied himself, therefore, solely to concentrate and direct the resources he could command independent of that court: these were small, and his success was but commensurate with his means. To the court of Spain he now made application, through the Spanish ambassador at Paris, and more immediately through Lawless, who had long been in that king's service. By these means some money was obtained, but only in very small quantities. Officers were picked out of the Irish troops then in the service of Spain, and sent off by different routes to join the

* An anecdote upon this subject is told in the Memoirs of Madame de Maintenon:—"Ses maîtresses ne le gouvernoient point: la Comtesse de P——, livrée à ses ennemis, crut que l'instant de foiblesse étoit arrivé, et osa le sonder sur une affaire importante. L'amant saute du lit, et la prenant par la main, la conduit devant une glace: 'Vois-tu cette tête charmante?' lui dit-il; 'elle est faite pour les caresses de l'amour, mais non pour les secrets de l'état."—*Mémoires de Madame de Maintenon*, tom. v. p. 676.

Pretender. But these attempts were generally rendered abortive by the delay which intervened before they could be accomplished; and the officers were on their way when the Chevalier returned from Scotland.

At the same time Bolingbroke took advantage of every accident which occurred to involve some of the other powers of Europe in the quarrel. Sweden offered some prospects of success; but after much expectation had been excited, he had the mortification to find that his efforts were in vain. He made an abortive attempt to fit out privateers who should cruise under the Pretender's commission;—an attempt which, like all the others he had made, failed, because there were no resources to furnish it with the requisites of success.

After trying every possible quarter and exhausting every chance of success, Bolingbroke determined, as he declared to the French foreign secretary, that he would be no longer made an instrument of amusing the Scotch: since he could do them no service, he resolved that he would at least inform them that they must flatter themselves no longer with hopes of succour from France. D'Huxelles approved his resolution, and advised him to execute it; explicitly declaring it as his opinion, that it was the only thing which was left to do.*

* Bolingbroke wrote an earnest letter to Sir William Windham, to dissuade him from committing the Tories further in this falling cause. This letter fell into the hands of the

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Before he could act upon this determination, the bubble had burst—the real weakness of the cause had become apparent, and the adventurer was returned. Upon arriving at St. Germain's, he was met by Bolingbroke, and received him with every mark of approbation. The court of France was alarmed that he should be in that kingdom and so near the court: they urged his immediate departure, and Bolingbroke concurred in the policy of such a step. The displeasure of England and the evident ruin of his cause would, he thought, induce the Duke of Lorraine to refuse him the asylum which he had hitherto afforded him: in that case, he would be obliged to seek a refuge in the papal dominions;—a retreat of all others the most disadvantageous to him, and offering the fewest facilities of commencing any new intrigues. For these reasons, Bolingbroke advised him to depart immediately for Bar, before the duke had time to desire him to look out for some other residence;—a project in which he would probably have succeeded, but which he was very ill disposed to try.

On the contrary, he intended to stay at St. Germain's until he could have an interview with the regent; and he sent Bolingbroke back to Paris to solicit the meeting. The regent refused the application with a violence little in accordance with his

government, and a copy was preserved. It is printed from the Townshend Papers in Coxe's Life of Walpole, vol. ii. p. 308.

usual character, and Bolingbroke returned not much displeased at his ill success. CHAP. XXIII.

This occurred about the end of February. A few days after, the Pretender and his minister parted. He said he acquiesced in the determination of the regent, and declared that he would immediately set out for Lorraine: his trunks were packed, his chaise was ordered to the door, and a message was despatched to Paris to assure the minister that he was gone. He inquired anxiously of Bolingbroke how soon he would be able to follow him, and gave him commissions for things which he desired him to bring after him. "No Italian," says our author, "ever embraced the man he was going to stab with greater show of affection and confidence." A.D. 1716.

But the designs of the Chevalier were far other than those he communicated to his secretary. Instead of hastening to Bar, he went to the little house in the Bois de Boulogne. Here he lay concealed for several days, and abandoned himself to the guidance of his female advisers. They introduced to him at this place the Spanish and Swedish ambassadors; and it is probable that their importunities prevailed upon the regent to grant an interview which he had refused to his minister.

Bolingbroke was too old a politician not to have information of all these intrigues; but he was too indifferent as to the cause of the Pretender, and too much disgusted with him personally, to care for their issue. On the fourth day after that person

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had avowedly left him for Lorraine, the Duke of Ormond waited upon him, and after hinting to him the purport of his visit, delivered him two papers in the Pretender's handwriting. One was a note to the duke; the enclosure was a slip of paper directed to Bolingbroke: the laconic and kingly strain in which it was written, contrasted ludicrously with the situation in which Bolingbroke knew the writer then to be.* It was a declaration that the king had no further occasion for his services, and contained an equally laconic order to deliver up the papers of his office. As the dismissed minister read this document, he might have reflected with a smile that his

* I have followed Bolingbroke's own account of this transaction. Mr. Archdeacon Coxe has given another version. He says, upon the authority of the Earl of Waldegrave's Diary, who professes to have had the account from General Buckley, then in the household of the Pretender, that Bolingbroke had supped with the Pretender the night before, left him at one o'clock in the morning, and received his dismissal at nine. He adds, that the reason of this unceremonious treatment was some contemptuous epithets which Bolingbroke applied to his master during a drunken fit, and which were repeated to the subject of them by the Duke of Ormond at the instance of the Earl of Mar. Mr. Coxe has not favoured us with the reasons which induced him to prefer this second-hand rumour to the testimony of the person who must have known and could have no interest in disguising the truth. Too many persons were cognizant of the circumstances, to allow us to suppose that he would have hazarded a public and deliberate falsehood upon such a point. I only mention this circumstance as a proof of the impartiality with which Mr. Coxe treats his hero's great opponent.

royal master was then skulking in disguise at a cottage kept not for the most honourable or dignified of purposes, and that his royal mandate was probably penned at the dictation of two ladies whose profession it would be difficult to designate without violence to the decency of modern expression. The papers of his office were the contents of a moderate sized paper-case ; and if Bolingbroke disobeyed the order in this respect, it was to show that he felt no resentment at the affair which could impel him for a moment to take a revenge that was in his power. Among the letters he had received from the Pretender were several reflecting in no measured terms upon the capacity of the man whom he now sent to fulfil the disagreeable office of communicating his dismissal. These he collected and returned by a private channel; the others, together with his seals of office, he delivered to the duke. And thus ended, by another unceremonious dismissal, Bolingbroke's second career as a minister.

The circumstance that he was now free of a party which he never liked, was doubtless an event upon which he congratulated himself; but the manner of his dismissal was no less annoying. He took every measure in his power, however, to disguise his anger—if indeed it was not, as he asserts, merged in his contempt. He restored all the papers he had of the Pretender; but he never condescended to demand his own in return. He contented himself with showing this piece of shadowy royalty how

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little difficulty there was in getting rid of a man who wanted only an honourable excuse to get rid of him and his cause.

The queen-dowager was more sensible of the merits of the counsellor her son had dismissed: she sent to Bolingbroke, begging him not to resign the seals, and promising that everything should yet be accommodated. "No," replied the insulted nobleman, "tell them I am now a free man, and may this arm rot off if it ever directs sword or pen in their service again." *

* Earl of Waldegrave's Diary.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Calumnies vented against Bolingbroke.—Impeached by the Pretender. The Articles of his Impeachment examined.

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After this event Bolingbroke remained for some days in retirement, and having communicated the circumstances of his dismissal to two or three friends, resolved to live alone until the noise the circumstance made in the scandal-loving city of Paris should subside. This did not happen so soon as he expected: when he again came abroad, he found every mouth filled with anecdotes of his treachery and duplicity; his name was mentioned with the most opprobrious epithets, and the most scandalous stories were circulated and believed.

These were so extravagant, that he never deigned to refute or even notice them: they generally carried in themselves their refutation. We shall select one as a specimen of the rest.

The Pretender, in his journey to Bar, was to have been accompanied only by one or two attendants; and, as we have seen, Bolingbroke urged his immediate departure. Some days after, it was discovered that a design had been formed of waylaying him upon the road, and murdering him. The project

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was concocted by two Englishmen, and was to have been executed at Evreux, which lay upon his road. The plot was discovered, and the men seized and convicted of the crime; but as France was then engaged in some negotiations with the British government, they were set at liberty. It was now declared that Bolingbroke was the author of the whole affair: he it was who had hired the assassins; he had named the spot for the commission of the deed; he had projected the journey to Lorraine, and had used every effort to force his victim into the toils he had prepared for him.*

The absurdity of such a charge was too great even for Bolingbroke's most determined enemies to lend it their countenance. But it was whispered around the circles of Parisian society; and many who hated the man they could not rival, hesitated to pronounce it false, although they wanted the effrontery to proclaim it true.

This, and several other charges which were at this time whispered against him,—such as having applied to his own use a large sum of the Chevalier's money, and having, during the time that person was in Scotland, left him without any notice of what was doing in France,—were particular facts which particular facts could be brought to disprove.† Thus,

* Remarks of Lord Bolingbroke's famous Letter, &c. p. 57.—Mémoires de Madame de Maintenon, tom. v. p. 271.

† The Earl of Stair writes to Walpole concerning these reports thus: — March 3rd, 1716. — "The true Jacobite

the queen's treasurer at St. Germain's could say, that the little money the Chevalier had, passed through his hands; and so far from Bolingbroke having received any for his own use, he had spent a great part of his own no very large income in the service: and it was a fact which all connected with the expedition knew, that the Chevalier received no less than five expresses from Bolingbroke during the short time he was in Scotland;—no proof of neglect on the part of his secretary, when it is remembered that he was only absent from France about six weeks in all. These charges at first gained credence from the impudence with which they were asserted; they died away as soon as they were compared with

project has been at last discovered, and they imagine nobody would tell it but Bolingbroke, who they have, as they now say, clearly discovered has all along betrayed them; and so poor Harry is turned out from being secretary of state, and the seals are given to Mar; and they use poor Harry most unmercifully, and call him knave and traitor, and God knows what. I believe all poor Harry's fault was, that he could not play his part with a grave enough face; he could not help laughing now and then at such kings and queens. He had a mistress here at Paris; and got drunk now and then, and he spent the money upon his mistress that he should have bought powder with; and neglected buying and sending the powder and the arms, and never went near the queen: and, in one word, told Lord Stair all their designs, and was had out of England for that purpose. I would not have you laugh, Mr. Walpole, for all this is very serious. For the rest, they begin now to apprehend that their king is unlucky, and that the westerly winds, and Bolingbroke's treason, have defeated the finest project that ever was laid." — *Walpole Papers; Coxe's Life of Walpole.*

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the facts, which were too notorious to be contradicted or perverted. But there were others which from their nature were less capable of immediate refutation, and were insisted upon after the former had been long forgotten.

These were of a less specific character: they related to his general conduct, to his fidelity, to his assiduity,—nay, even to his capacity;—an objection to which the envy of contemporaries might perhaps lend a momentary colour, but which in the eyes of posterity can recoil only upon those who alleged it. These charges were soon afterwards adduced in a more tangible form. With a ludicrous gravity, the Pretender and his adherents impotently aped the malignity of his enemies in England; articles of impeachment were exhibited against him in the petty debating-club which was dignified with the appellation of a parliament, and Bolingbroke was found guilty upon seven charges. The neglect of the duties of his office stood foremost in the rank of his offences. With what foundation of truth this charge was constructed, the account we have given of his conduct throughout may sufficiently declare. Those who applied to him upon business could, it was said, seldom obtain an interview; and if they succeeded, they could yet more rarely find the secretary in a mood to listen to their communications, or to discuss with them the object of their inquiry. For this there might be some slight ground. The parties who were ever thronging him with fabulous

accounts of concerted risings, and childish projects for future revolutions, would often find in Bolingbroke a contemptuous listener; and he might sometimes refuse to waste his attention upon their drivellings. We have already seen sufficient to show us that the frantic monks and harebrained Jacobites who formed the body-guard of the Chevalier were not the men whom a statesman would admit into his counsels, or honour with his confidence. That Bolingbroke was ever really wanting in investigating the subjects that were committed to his care, his detection of the monk who was about to lead the Chevalier and his party to certain destruction may go far to disprove; the contempt which he cared not to conceal for many similar characters, the same event may fully justify.

The second charge was neglecting to send arms and ammunition to the Earl of Mar, who was reduced to the greatest distress for want of them, and who sent no less than six messengers to require them of him.

The answer to this charge was more simple and conclusive than gratifying to the vanity of the person who directed it to be brought. There were no arms or ammunition to be obtained. The Pretender had out of England no money, no resources, no arms, no ammunition; nor had he any friends who could or would supply them. The efforts which Bolingbroke was making during the whole time of the Pretender's remaining in Scotland have been stated; their issue

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has also been stated; and that account sufficiently shows the impossibility there was of obtaining succours from the French court, for a cause, the success of which was at that time even opposed to their interest, and towards which their actions, whatever their professions might have been, manifested enmity rather than favour.

The third article in this mock impeachment was a neglect in sending assistance to the Pretender while he was in Scotland; a charge which has been already abundantly met, and which might have been easily disposed of by the accused.

In the fourth article we have a particular fact; an advantage which but few of the others afford. It states that there was at Havre a considerable quantity of stores and arms belonging to the Pretender; and charges, that at the time these were so particularly necessary for his service, they were suffered to remain useless; and that Count Castel Blanco, in whose custody they were, could procure from the secretary no instructions for their transportation, although he made continual applications for that purpose.

If this accusation can be supported, it carries with it a confirmation of all the rest: it deprives the secretary of his great and satisfactory ground of defence—the non-existence of the succours which he was expected to forward. The facts, however, will be found somewhat at variance with the charge. As stated by Bolingbroke, they amount to this:—The

stores were part of those which were landed from the Chevalier's vessels at the instance of the English admiral. They were then placed in the public magazines of France. Castel Blanco was a Spaniard, who, having married an Englishwoman, considered himself therefore entitled to take a deep interest in the disposal of the British crown. He became a confederate of the cabal in the Bois de Boulogne; and these people, who were piqued by the contempt and desertion of Bolingbroke, were eager to do something which might shake his credit and increase their own importance. By their means the regent was induced to promise that these stores should be delivered up to their original owner, if this could be accomplished without committing the neutrality of France. This promise was communicated to Bolingbroke, who, although too experienced to confide in it, was too careful to neglect it. A project was invented, by which the condition upon which the promise was founded should be observed. Castel Blanco was to receive the stores, and was to enter into recognizances to convey them to Spain, and thence to the West Indies. Bolingbroke was to provide a vessel for this purpose, which Blanco was to pretend to hire or buy. When the ship was at sea, she was of course to proceed directly for Scotland.

The success of this project depended entirely on the secrecy which was preserved,—and secrecy and celerity are not often attainable together: yet in a fortnight's time the ship was ready to sail, and no

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suspicion of her destination or of her belonging to the Chevalier was gone abroad. This argued no neglect or incapacity on the part of the manager. But the stores were not forthcoming; nor could Castel Blanco get an order for their delivery until the Pretender was on his way back to Gravelines. The first order he gave upon landing was to stop all ships which were proceeding upon his account to Scotland: this was one of the few ships stopped in obedience to that order.

Such is the account of this business which is to be gathered from the justification Bolingbroke published a short time after. Since his facts have never yet been called in question, we are bound to believe them true: and if they are true, what becomes of this fourth charge of these veracious articles?

The fifth charge amounts to no more than that certain persons at the French court doubted his lordship's fidelity to the cause, and that yet more entertained but little respect for his discretion. Discretion was a quality which Bolingbroke forfeited much of his claim to when he consented to enter so miserable a service at all: but perhaps even *his* impetuosity would have received a check, had he known that he was to be responsible for all the opinions which the fools around him might choose to entertain of his integrity or conduct.

Sixthly, he is accused of having prevented many merchants from sending arms and ammunition into

Scotland, by requiring a public order for their embarkation; a thing which he well knew the court of France could not grant. This accusation is general, and can be met only by a general denial, which may be drawn from probabilities. It would be a singular thing indeed that Bolingbroke should restrain independent merchants from proceeding to Scotland; and that not only when their errand there would give some hopes of success to a party with which his hopes of restoration were linked, but when he was also straining every nerve to obtain privateers, who should receive the Pretender's commission to cruise, in return for a voyage they were to make to Scotland on the account of the Pretender. But the fact is, that the time the insurrection lasted in Scotland was so short, and the delays in France were so long, that there was no time during the absence of the Chevalier to plan and execute any expedition, however trifling.

The last article was a repetition of the obsolete scandal of the Parisian *cafés*, stating that Bolingbroke had held no correspondence with the Chevalier during his absence. He publicly declared this accusation to be false, and pointed out the persons through whom the correspondence passed. That reply was never contradicted.

These articles were printed and circulated in England; and Bolingbroke directed his secretary to give them the following laconic answer:—

"The Earl of Mar and the others who came from

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Scotland are so much in want of any excuse for their flight, that they have thought fit to have my Lord Bolingbroke discharged the Chevalier's service in the most abrupt and injurious manner, under the pretence that the want of powder which he delayed to send forced them to abandon Scotland.

"His lordship says publicly,—1st, That he is able to prove, that if they wanted powder, it was not by his fault.

"2ndly, That according to what the Chevalier and Earl of Mar both say in their letters, they must have come away as they did, had they had all the powder in France.

"3rdly, That if they had pleased to have stayed in Scotland a few days longer, they would have received near 10,000 arms, and near 30,000 weight of powder, and other stores in proportion.

"And lastly, That the true reason flows from another source; and that he knew and spoke of the design to discard him long before the want of powder was so much as talked of. That he is unwilling to enter into particulars of those general heads, for reasons that may be easily guessed, since he is persuaded he shall neither pass for a traitor nor a driveller among his friends."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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